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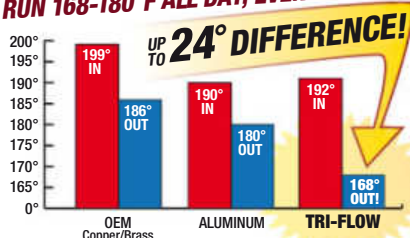


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**ON THE COVER:** A.J. Mueller photographed Tom Bailey's Sick Seconds 2.0 prowling the streets of Detroit, Michigan, on its shakedown run before Drag Week 2015.



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# Hot Rod Predictions for 2016



I once got in trouble with our former creative director for doing a cover story about predicting the future. He said it was a terrible idea, and that I couldn't possibly know what was going to happen. While he may have been right in principle, I also know that forecasting what's coming is powerful. It's not that I have a crystal ball, but I think it's possible to recognize the path we're on, talk about our trajectory, and make the future we want come true. To that end, here are my predictions for the New Year.

## Factory Performance Cars:

The Ford Raptor and Dodge Hellcat proved that halo cars that are attainable are more powerful—and profitable—than supercars ever will be. What does that mean for the Big Three? Expect the Hellcat to displace the need for Viper. Expect the Ford GT to win Le Mans (if it doesn't, expect it to come back with a twin-turbo EcoBoost flat-plane crank 5.0L V8), but look for some giant-killing performance out of the Mustang GT350R and Cobra Jet. Will we see a mid-engine Corvette? Yes. But not until Chevy has exhausted every other technological option first.

**Aerospace Influence:** In the early days of hot rodding, the aerospace industry brought us fuel injection, disc brakes, chromoly tubing, TIG welding,

AN fittings, and other WWII technologies. Look for our worlds to merge again as private companies like Space X (whose sister company is Tesla) share innovation and tech with their automotive counterparts.

## Cottage Industry Speed

**Parts:** While there's a corporate consolidation going on in the automotive aftermarket, there's still tremendous opportunity for people like you to make speed parts for our industry. As design software allows 3-D printing, water-jet cutting, CNC machining, and even CNC bending to be more accessible, expect some of the coolest new parts to show up on eBay, where you'll be buying parts from fellow hot rodders.

## How You'll learn About Your Car:

We're moving away from a world of service manuals and into a world of computer feedback. The number of sensors required on modern vehicles is allowing us to process vehicle data in a way that changes our world of diagnostic observation to one of anticipatory logic. Our cars will literally be able to sense the events that lead to vehicle breakdowns by batching together data from sensors to predict everything from when to change the air filter, to when the engine is on the verge of a head-gasket failure.

►HOTROD.COM/David-Kennedy

[Just as Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek* predicted, our cellphones have become the gateway to the modern world. Even for hot rodders.



© Larry Chen

## IN MY OPINION

**Great Advice Machines are lazy. If there's a way for them to do anything else but work, they will.**

## Self-Driving Cars

These are none of your concern. They're for people who don't like to drive. You'll own an electric performance car long before you pay extra money for a car that does something you enjoy doing.

## Rust Is Going Away

Embracing aluminum, composites, and high-nickel alloys means that our industry is on the march to eradicate corrosion. As hot rodders embrace lightweight technologies—many of which don't oxidize like iron and steel—we'll also run into the reality that paint and corrosion-preventing coatings just add weight.

►HOTROD.COM/Brandon-Gillogly



Watching and covering Drag Week™ live for the past few years has desensitized me to just how bizarre it all is. Then at the end of the week when Bryant Goldstone made it to the last day, unhooked his trailer, and cruised his Javelin past while we were eating dinner, it dawned on me once again how hardcore these guys are.

►HOTROD.COM/Elana-Scherr



The word of the week was *wagon*. I'm convinced that the smartest possible Drag Week™ vehicle is a nice, fast family hauler. Fits all your stuff, and you can sleep in it, which means you can spend all your money on turbo parts.

►HOTROD.COM/Thom-Taylor



I thought NASCAR's biggest problem was its homogenized spec cars. But after seeing the Talladega race, NASCAR's got much bigger problems. When your rules are so convoluted it takes an explanation after the race for who won, then it should be apparent to all this is a crazy time.

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- OBDII compatible with select GM vehicles
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# Pro Mod Cars

John Scialpi's blown 1957 Chevy and Dave Riolo's 1955 Chevy square off in 1988 at Sears Point in Sonoma, California. Their "pro nostalgia" antics would morph into what we now call Pro Mod race cars. The origins of Pro Mod are murky and a bit complicated, but let's take a stab at it.

There was a revolution taking place in Sportsman drag racing in the late-1970s. The lighter and quicker Vegas and Monzas were pounding the larger shoebox 1955–1957 Chevys and Willys coupes in the Top Sportsman classes. But once blowers and nitrous for carbureted engines showed up in the door-slammer brackets, some of the larger, heavier cars gained parity—and fans loved seeing the shoebox cars whip the smaller cars.

The 1970's fast-bracket racing (called Bracket One on the West

Coast) evolved into what became "Quick 8 and Quick 16" racing; these were heads-up, no breakout, quarter-mile romps with only two rules: two doors and two carbs. Where true bracket cars ran traditional all-run, no-ladder formats, the Quick 8s were paired on eliminator ladders. Once qualified, they could pick their own dial-ins, so there was plenty of action.

By the late-1980s, both coasts were fielding different versions of what would become Pro Mod. On the West Coast, Muscle Car Shootout events pitted 1950s shoeboxes running big-cubic-inch blown mountain motors and shots of nitrous, blasting them into the low-7s in booked-in match races or in Pro Gas. Guys like Riolo were running 9.50 indexes or straight heads-up sprints.

On the East Coast, in the fall of 1987, Bristol Dragway in Bristol,





Tennessee, held an NOS-sponsored Saturday-night shootout for the Top 4 quickest door-slammers. The following year, this morphed into Top Sportsman Quick 8 heads-up shootouts on Saturday nights at IHRA national events for the quickest eight qualifiers.

Quick 8 and Quick 16 events were gaining traction throughout the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic with touring groups like the all-supercharged “Wild Bunch” influencing fast-bracket racers that helped spawn IHRA’s Top Sportsman Eliminator. By then, the cars were dipping into the 6s at almost 200 mph.

One of the key players that helped these cars gain significant traction with the fans was Charlie Carpenter’s 1955 Chevy. With his nitrous shots at the Christmas Tree, people would come running to catch the action. These were real cars with steel bodies and frames.

It wasn’t until bracket racer Robby Vandergriff appeared driving Jim Bryant’s Thundercraft 1957 Chevy, with its fiberglass body and tube frame, did racers think to break out of the body-on-frame door-slammer archetype. This was a turning point that soon brought a cornucopia of chopped, sectioned, sliced, and diced fiberglass bodies slammed onto tube chassis and powered by blown monster motors, ushering in what we now know as Pro Mod.

The first cars wearing a “Pro Modified” designation showed up in 1989 at ATCO Dragway in Atco, New Jersey. The IHRA fielded elimination rounds to showcase this new class, which was not yet named. Pro Modified made its official class debut at the 1990 IHRA Winternationals in Darlington, North Carolina.

➤ [HOTROD.COM](http://HOTROD.COM)/Thom-Taylor



# Scene by Readers

**01** **DUFF WOLLEY**'s great grandmother bought this 1981 V6 Buick new, and it's been passed down to him. Being a true hot rodder, it now has a Chevy 350/350 combo with a Detroit Locker. **02** **PAT POSEY** has always wanted a big, fat blower sticking through the hood of his car, so he built his dream, a 1963 Nova with a blown Precision Race Engines 434ci engine. **03** **MARCOS GANDOLFO**, who converted this former four-door sedan into a two-door hardtop, built this tribute to Fred Lorenzen's 1966 NASCAR Galaxie in Argentina over a six-year period. **04** **WILLIAM BEDINGFIELD** calls his shortened, sectioned 1933 Dodge four-door sedan a Dodge Victoria, which was built on a 1991 GMC Sonoma chassis with a 305ci Chevy and 700R4 trans. **05** This super-clean 1932 Ford three-window coupe is the work of **DON WALLA** from Dayton, Nevada. **06** **ROBERT MILLER** says his 1971 Camaro runs a 496ci big-block Chevy, 700R4 automatic, and "everything I could think of." **07** **KEN BRISKLEY** from Hyde Park, New York, hot-rodged a Little Tikes "Cozy Coupe" for his grandson's second birthday. It has a fully welded steel frame, the plastic body is slightly channeled, and the engine was made from a heat sink from an air compressor. **08** Lewiston, Idaho's **JACKSON THOMPSON** has been building this Model A Tudor since he got the Model A frame when he was 17. It most recently won Best Rat Rod and People's Choice at Lewiston's 2015 Hot August Nights. **09** Hatch alignment, paint stripping, electrical troubleshooting, sanding, and spot painting are just some of the chores **CORY ADAMS**' 13-year-old son, **RILEY**, has tackled on their 1988 Camaro. Start them young! **10** From Birmingham, Alabama, comes **KEN DELGRECO**'s clean 1970 Chevelle he calls Shadow Shaker. It runs a dual-quad, 454ci, solid-roller-cam Chevy engine. **11** Muscatine, Iowa's **BILL LECHNER** says when he drives his 305ci-powered 1949 GMC, he's Ben Dover and his wife is Illene Dover—get it? **12** Out of Freelon, Ontario, **DEAN MARTIN** submitted this shot of his dad's 1950 M47 Mercury truck. He installed a 302 and AOD drivetrain with updated independent suspension rolling on Centerlines. **13** They don't get much nicer than this 1970 Buick GSX 455 Stage I, built by **DANA HINRICH**, with a Tremec five-speed hung behind that 455. **14** We showed you **DEAN MARTIN**'s dad's 1950 Merc truck, but this is Dean's own 1964 Pontiac Catalina, powered by a 389ci Pontiac and automatic. It's been lowered and runs five-spoke Americans. **15** Home builder **JERRY HALEY** from El Paso, Texas, recently finished his fiberglass 1932 Ford five-window coupe running a 409ci W-motor Chevy and four-speed, with lots of traditional hot rod touches. **16** Our second Deuce three-window coupe is from Columbus, Nebraska, and was built by **RICK CAMPBELL**. It includes a filled top and grille shell, a small-block Chevy, and wide whites for that classic hot rod look.

01



02



03



04



05



06



07



## SEND YOUR PHOTOS

To be included in Scene by Readers, send low-rez photos and some information about them to [HOTROD@HotRod.com](mailto:HOTROD@HotRod.com). If we elect to use your photo, we will email back with instructions on how to send us a high-rez photo for publication.





08



09



10



11



12



13



14



15



16

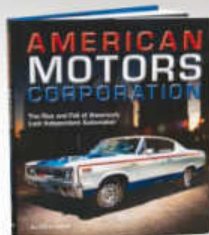




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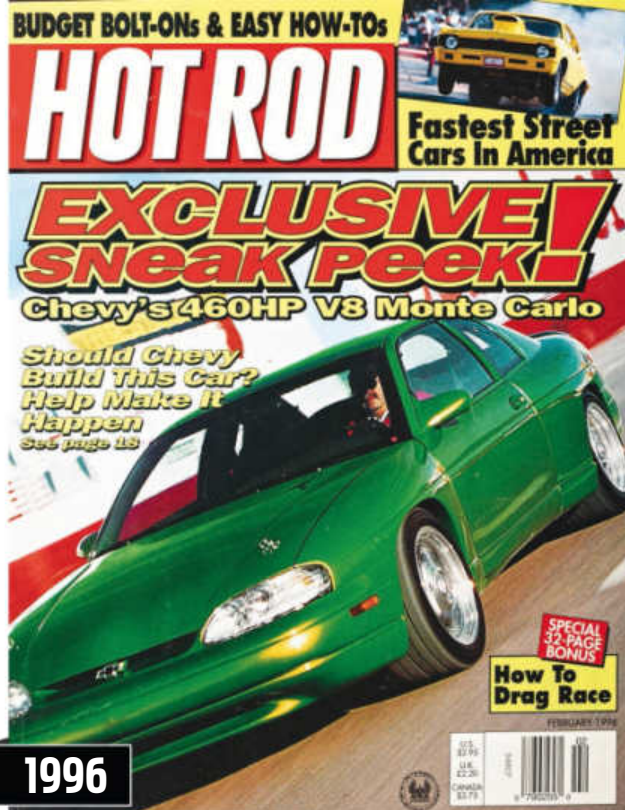
# The HOT ROD Archives



1976



1956



1996

## 20 YEARS AGO

**February 1996 (108 pages, \$3.25):** The tube-chassis debate rages passionately throughout this package. Editor Drew Hardin's column defends HRM's philosophical resistance to continuing down that slippery slope. A single-topic letters section is subtitled, "The Future of Pro Street." Cole Quinnell's Fastest Street Car Shootout coverage opens with Tony Christian launching a tube-framed 1957 Chevy under the headline, "Street Racing Goes Pro." Jeff Smith's tech story has the catchiest opener. Recalling how *Two Lane Blacktop's* mechanic, Dennis Wilson, "spent the entire movie changing jets," Smith suggested that new metering blocks with externally replaceable cartridges would've saved valuable time better spent chasing skirts.

## 40 YEARS AGO

**February 1976 (112 pages, \$1):** Readers of a certain, um, *maternity* will remember the double shocks of (1) seeing this cover slide through the mail slot and (2) discovering that it was not an early arriving April Fool's issue, after all. While a weak case might've been made for Z-cars as slow hot rods, what in the world was that imported economy car and minitruck doing here? Staffers must've been asking the same question—and not anxious to answer, judging from their failure to take individual responsibility inside. Possibly never in HOT ROD's history has a cover story gotten eight full pages but zero bylines, as did "Dy-No-Mite-Datsuns!"

## 60 YEARS AGO

**February 1956 (68 pages, 25¢):** Dragging was still such a small sliver of the hobby that the conclusion of NHRA's first national event didn't even rate a small cover blurb by the editor—a fellow named Wally Parks. Inside, readers were treated to six pages of Dean Moon and Lester Nehamkin photos from Perryville, Arizona, where NHRA finalized class eliminations left undecided by September's Kansas rainout during the season-ending Safety Safari meet. Another story was devoted to Calvin Rice, Arizona's Top Eliminator and, consequently, NHRA's first national champion. This postrace article started an annual tradition of rewarding Nationals winners with car features in the following issue. ➤ **Dave Wallace**





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# Automotive Archaeology

## Turbocharged V8 Olds Jetfire Stashed Away for 40 Years

Ryan Brutt



This is a 1962 Oldsmobile Jetfire, one of 3,765 produced, and, along with the Chevrolet Corvair Monza, one of the first turbocharged production passenger car ever made in the United States.

The car was still sitting on its original bias-ply tires. A peek in the trunk revealed two gallons of Olds' Turbo-Rocket water-methanol injection mix still stashed away. Inside, a nearly perfect silver and black bucket-seat interior. The car had only rolled a little more than 44,000 miles—this thing was like new.

Making the car even more rare was its factory four-speed with the one-year-only console and that turbocharger fluid-injection gauge, which was basically an early boost gauge. If you were cruising, the needle was in the green Economy zone; if you were hard on it, it would be in the red Power zone. Under the hood, the original 215ci V8 and turbo were perfectly preserved.

► Ryan Brutt



[You've probably never seen one, but for 1962 and 1963, Olds offered a 215hp, 215ci, turbocharged aluminum V8 with 10.25:1 compression.



[Two snow tires and two extra jugs of Oldsmobile Turbo-Rocket fluid were found in the trunk along with the original spare.



[Part number 585411, Oldsmobile's Jetfire relied on a milky water-methanol injection fluid it called Turbo-Rocket fluid to tame detonation in the turbocharged 215ci V8.





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# Take 5 With VIC EDELBROCK

Vic Edelbrock Jr. has seen it all in the world of hot rodding, racing, and the automotive aftermarket—and has been in the middle of most of it, too. The Edelbrock company is one of the pillars of hot rodding, having weathered numerous storms and dominated the performance aftermarket for more than 75 years. Vic also helped spearhead the Specialty Equipment Marketing Association (SEMA), the aftermarket's presiding overseer, as president from 1971–1975.

When the government started regulating car emissions in the 1970s, it looked like performance cars and the aftermarket were doomed. Vic saw the government's involvement as an opportunity to use these new restrictions as validation that performance could go hand-in-hand with better emissions and that it was a marketing gift in disguise. Things really took off from there.

More recently, when the Great Recession rocked the world, Edelbrock really felt the downturn. Today Edelbrock is healthy again, and as Vic likes to say, "It's the niches, we've always looked for the niches. If we see there's a niche for something out there, we go for it." Edelbrock's most recent niche forays may surprise you; the company has pushed ahead with Eaton-based roots supercharger kits for new cars and now sees its kits used by such aftermarket performance houses as Callaway and Lingenfelter. Edelbrock has even developed a supercharger system for Lotus that will be sold in the U.S. next year.

So to get the pulse of the performance aftermarket in 2016

and beyond, with his unique perspective, HOT ROD sat down with Vic Edelbrock.

►HOTROD.COM/Thom-Taylor

**HRM| How did you know at the age of 26 what Edelbrock should become?**

**VE|** My dad left me a very good base to start from. We had no debt, cash in the bank, and so if we made a little mistake, it wasn't going to kill the company. [Dad] had a lot of friends, who were also my friends. And we had Bobby Meeks and Don Towle and they stayed with me—of course, my dad only had 10 employees when he died in 1962. They were all nervous—they thought I was going to take the bank account and go to Vegas and there would be no more money, but of course I didn't want to do that. I just wanted to listen to what people needed and give it to them. I started going to the U.S. Nationals and went there 20 straight times—I needed to get out there and talk to the racers and our customers and see what they were doing and what they needed. We go on HOT ROD's Power Tour—I've only missed one. You learn so much by going out and talking to the people and see what's going on, and it's a lot of fun.

**HRM| How are you involved in Edelbrock these days?**

**VE|** I've been doing this for 50 years, and I can help because there are a lot of things I know that I've seen and can bring to the table. Steve Whipple [vice president of sales and marketing at Edelbrock] and his crew and Wayne Murray in manufacturing and Rob

**[Having weathered the Great Recession, Vic Edelbrock Jr. has steered the company his father started to more efficient production and new markets like diesel.]**



by Larry Chen



Simons in R&D they're doing a great job. But I have got to know that when I go on the road and talk with enthusiasts, that our product does what it's supposed to.

**HRM | Holley recently purchased MSD, Racepak, et al; is Edelbrock looking at doing something similar?**

**VE |** I can't respond to that, but I think there will be more consolidation because of how things are now. We picked up a financial partner because of [the recession in] 2008. We're in a better position now—it was building up in 2006 and 2007 and then we saw things that we didn't like, and then 2008 it went to hell. We went public in 1994 and then private in 2004, and when we did, we assumed some debt—we never had any debt before. We've rebounded, we're back and we're doing well, and we've built the company up to where it's all under one roof. We've got the foundry, machine shop, and engineering all the way around, where somebody can come in and if they want private-label products we can make it for them. We've got a tremendous name quality-wise and we're keeping it that way—that's the way my father started this company. We're proud that our stuff works.

**HRM | How has the aftermarket changed?**

**VE |** You know in the mid-1970s we didn't fight the ARB [Air Resources Board], we invited it to come over and see who we were and what we were doing. That opened its eyes and really helped the whole aftermarket. It helped SEMA to help us make sure we had a market to sell in. The engines today, you don't just change the intake manifold, cylinder heads, and camshaft, and when you add it all up, you get a pretty good number. Now you can take a dead-stock car, put our supercharger kit on, and you don't change the exhaust system or anything else. Into the 2000s, the manufacturers in Detroit got smarter and had better stuff right from the git-go, so we had to have our engineers look at their stuff and we found we could still get a performance gain for the customer. We started supercharging about six years ago, and it was a great move for us because it allowed us to make a system you put on the car completely stock and touch nothing else—no cutting, welding, or grinding—

and you gain 100 to 130 hp, and you're emissions legal.

**HRM | Where's the aftermarket going?**

**VE |** It's the love affair of the automobile, remember that. We have it here in the USA more than any other country in the world. The car events that take place all over the country gives car guys and gals a reason to build a car in their garage, and it's beautiful. I like to vintage-car race and I see and feel the excitement that it spreads. For this company, we have to look at what changes out there in front of us. We look at the OEs out of Detroit, at their performance cars, and then develop a product for that car. We have the ability to make something better that performs better, and so in 25 years we'll still be doing that. We won't know what "that" is until we see it, but we have to wait for it to happen because we are taking something that is built by them and then modifying it, but that's what we have been doing for over 75 years.

**HRM | So your development money is going to the new stuff, but you're making the most from the small-block components. Why don't you just make the old stuff and not put the energy and money into developing new-car stuff?**

**VE |** If you want to keep the company going uphill and keep up the sales, you've got to get into the new areas and new opportunities. That's why we are going into the Jeep market and small import market and diesel market. There are no crystal balls that give you the exact picture of what's going to happen. And some ask how can I just make something without knowing how many cars are out there and all of that? It's just the seat-of-your-pants.

**HRM | Where's the next generation of hot rodders going to come from?**

**VE |** We have been working heavily with getting youth out of their computers and be more constructive with cars, and it's starting to work. Jim Bingham, who does the [Hot Rodders of Tomorrow] Engine Challenge [HotRoddersOfTomorrow.com] told me they have 198 teams for their 2016 Challenge. Last year they had 92 teams. They do about nine stops a year throughout the country, and our Edelbrock Car Show event [in

Torrance, California] in May is one of the stops. It brings the youth together. The Edelbrock Family Foundation will be announcing we'll be putting a lot of money into his program. It's a great organization and great kids. You have to build the youth, you've got to bring them into all of this as they are coming up the ladder.

**HRM | What's new on the horizon for Edelbrock that gives us a clue about the aftermarket in general?**

**VE |** New markets for us are the Jeep, Subaru BRZ/Scion FR-S, and diesel. The supercharger allowed us to get into late-model cars, which we had never done before. We looked at the late-model stuff and several companies make superchargers, and we decided to sell [an Eaton-based] system. The new 2016 Z06 Corvette has a supercharger on it—I bought one, and I have one of our superchargers on my 2015 Corvette, too, and it adds 130 hp. But because GM didn't want to change the hood that much, they went with a smaller Eaton supercharger and we use the bigger one. We put ours down inside and they put theirs on top, and we can add 60 to 70 hp by changing to one of our systems because we'll have more pressure running through the engine. Callaway has 30 cars waiting for us to deliver this new supercharger system. We show the exact gain and torque our systems add because with our Corvette system we have 12 to 13 inches of runner length per cylinder, not just a common chamber, and that helps low-end torque, and we have a torque curve that's unbelievable. We're still going to make intake manifolds for LS3s, LS2s, and LS1s, where you can run a carb if you want. We'll have a new LS3 intake manifold at the SEMA show that will have a really different look for the design and something you can put on with a camshaft and get good performance. The tooling was expensive, but I'm the type who looks at what we make and drive what we make, and it's got to do what we say it will do. We are also doing a cylinder head for the [6.6L Duramax] diesel—this is the first time we've made product for a diesel. Guys race these, and the stock [aluminum] heads are thin, and there's no metal where you need to change the ports, and they run 50 to 60 psi of boost. We're excited about it. We've done our prelim work and have the castings now—and we'll see.

There are no crystal balls that give you the exact picture of what's going to happen."  
— Vic Edelbrock



## VIEW FROM VIC'S DESK

Edelbrock's hottest market is still the person with the older car with a small-block Chevy. "The guy buying our heads, manifold, and carb—we still sell a lot of that," Vic says. "There are a lot of people out there who can now afford to have a car like they [wanted] back when they were in high school."

### Vintage Hot Rodding

"Look at the Ford flathead stuff we sell, we are selling three times as much of those parts as we did 10 years ago. That shows you how many people want to go back to what they had, or want something that is period-correct."

### Discontinued Parts

Some are going for big money on eBay and Yellow Bullet, but would Edelbrock consider manufacturing some of the more expensive collector intakes again? "Yes," Vic says. "We would probably have to make a new pattern because the foundry isn't set up to do the old wood patterns, but we have done that [before], where we redo a new pattern and run 50 or so." Case in point: Edelbrock's small-block Chevy Torker manifold that it made in the early 1970s has been upgraded over the years (known as the Torker II), but some people wanted the original design. Edelbrock cleaned up the old pattern and now has the Torker in the catalog again.

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✍ Eric Rood and HOT ROD Staff    📷 Wes Allison, Larry Chen, and the HOT ROD Staff

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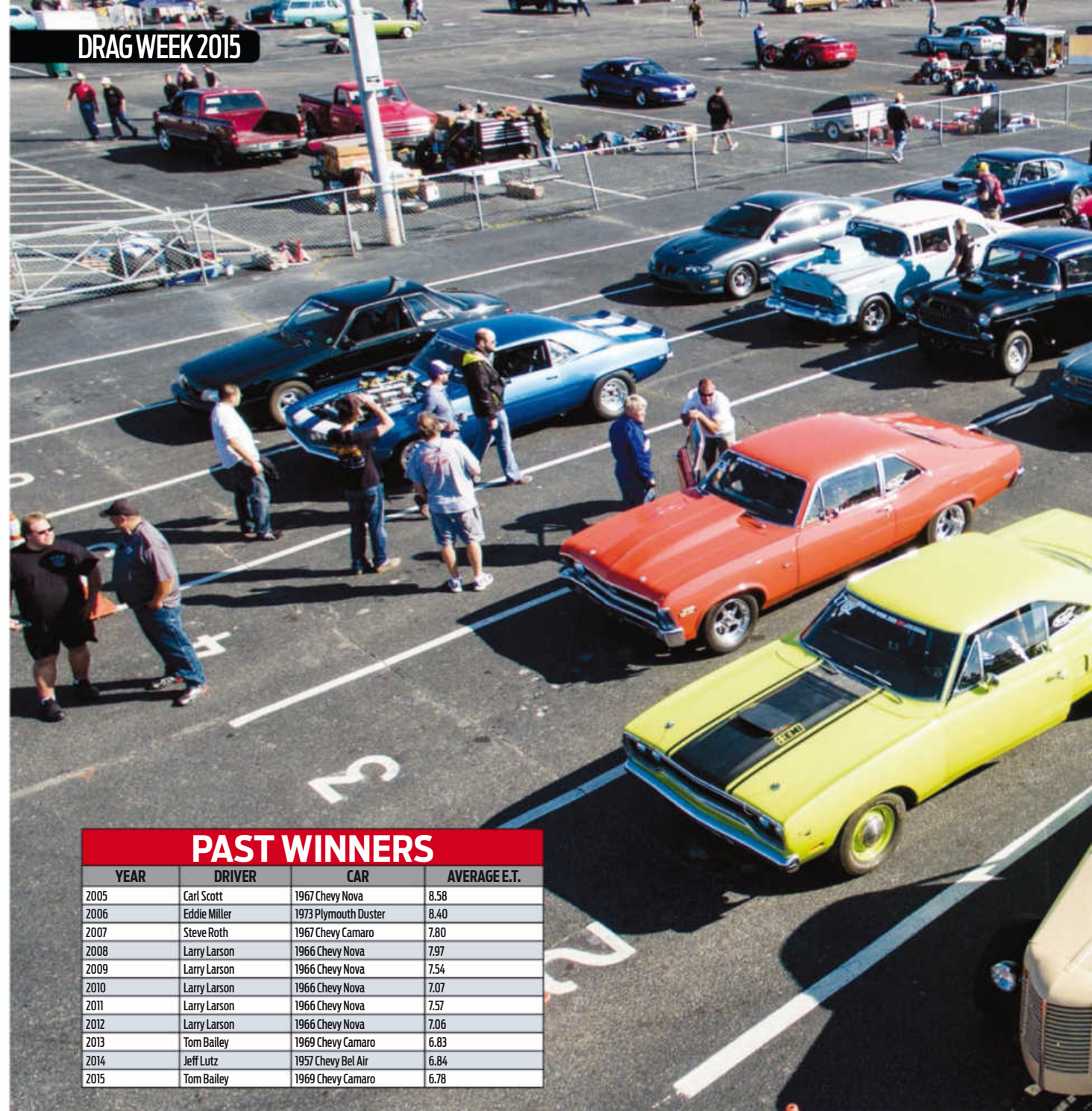
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DRAG WEEK 2015





## PAST WINNERS

YEAR	DRIVER	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
2005	Carl Scott	1967 Chevy Nova	8.58
2006	Eddie Miller	1973 Plymouth Duster	8.40
2007	Steve Roth	1967 Chevy Camaro	7.80
2008	Larry Larson	1966 Chevy Nova	7.97
2009	Larry Larson	1966 Chevy Nova	7.54
2010	Larry Larson	1966 Chevy Nova	7.07
2011	Larry Larson	1966 Chevy Nova	7.57
2012	Larry Larson	1966 Chevy Nova	7.06
2013	Tom Bailey	1969 Chevy Camaro	6.83
2014	Jeff Lutz	1957 Chevy Bel Air	6.84
2015	Tom Bailey	1969 Chevy Camaro	6.78

They say insanity is repeating the same behavior but expecting a different result—that's exactly what Drag Week™ 2015 was: street and strip insanity. This year, the 11th time Drag Week™ has run, was the most brutal event for participants yet. Of the 301 cars that started the week, 57 fell out of competition—dozens more than in previous years, with even seasoned Drag Week™ veterans like Jeff Lutz, Glenn Hunter, and John Wieschmann killing their cars early on. Drag Week™ ain't easy, but it's still a lot of fun.

## THE DRAG WEEK 300

The Drag Week™ drill goes something like this: HOT ROD limits the participants to around 300 cars, so competitors have, at most, a 30-minute window to sign up at [HOTROD.com](http://HOTROD.com) before the field

is full. Then they've got a few months to prepare their cars for the unique combo of not only making it dragstrip-bulletproof but also 1,000-street-miles capable.

On the Sunday before the event, HOT ROD techs all of the cars into one of 17 Drag Week™ classes and holds a test 'n' tune. On Monday, Day 1, competitors drive to that track, make last-minute adjustments, get in line, and see how their car flies down the strip—or doesn't.

Competitors then hand in their best e.t. slip of the day and pack up whatever fits in their Drag Week™ car or trailer they're towing—no support vehicles allowed—and head out onto America's backroads to the next dragstrip, some 200 to 300 miles away. This pattern is repeated for five days, and the winner in each class is the car with the quickest average e.t.—who made Drag Week's entire 1,000-mile





road trip. There are checkpoints that are required for participants to photograph with their cars as verification they followed the predetermined Drag Week™ road-trip route. All of them become impromptu car shows that filled up with locals to the extent that they became scenes unto themselves.

## WHY DO THIS?

The intensity and urgency of clicking off a good time with only a short amount of time to do it is the adrenaline-rush ritual that pulls racers together. You can't bring a gang to help you tune or fix your car—you've got to bring with you the extra hands and tools you'll need, except you don't really know what you'll need.

Whether a Drag Week™ veteran or your first time just spectating,

this year you witnessed the technology bar raised substantially. Tom Hogshead, who has participated in all 11 Drag Weeks with the same car—the only one to do that—says, “I come back to see new and different tech; there's lots of engineering to see, and then watch them try it out.” The Unlimited class tends to get the most attention, but the new Ultimate Iron class (basically, Unlimited cars with production steel bodies) seemed to rival the popularity of Unlimited. Bryant Goldstone's bright-red Javelin and Joe Barry's Drag Week™ veteran Bel Air filled the pits and grandstands with each appearance.

There were the usual shenanigans and accident or two, frayed nerves and flogging, but the 2015 HOT ROD Drag Week™ proved once again that you can design, create, and build the most radical street car in the world, but it takes Drag Week™ to make that dream a reality.



## STREET MACHINE ELIMINATOR

## JEREMY WILSON // 1966 CHEVROLET NOVA

While the winners of Drag Week's other 17 classes are determined by average e.t. for the week, the Street Machine Eliminator (formerly known as Daily Driver) takes a different approach to the class. There are no limitations on preparation for the car, but no car in the class can turn in a timeslip quicker than 10.00 seconds. The top 32 average e.t.'s in the class get put into a bracket race using Sportsman-style ladder (best e.t. faces 17th best, second-best faces 18th, and so on) and competitors can't run more than 0.10 second faster than their weekly average (called the dial-in). The first car of a pair through the finish line without running faster than his or her dial-in moves on to the next round of the ladder.

When the Street Machine Eliminator ladder was finished,

Jeremy Wilson—who qualified for the bracket 13th—emerged victorious in his Chevy Nova over David Burke's Pontiac LeMans. Both drivers faced a tough path just to get through the bracket, and for Burke, it came down to a last-minute chance to qualify at all with his final pass of the week, just bumping into the 27th spot with an 11.473-second pass.

Wilson's biggest challenge came from Ken Passerby in the semifinals in an all-Nova pairing. Both drivers nailed the tree with insane 0.037-second reaction times, and Wilson's front bumper just barely broke the finish-line beam 0.001 second before Passerby's. Wilson followed that up with relatively easy (because everything is easy compared to winning by one one-thousandth) defeat of Burke.

## STREET MACHINE ELIMINATOR WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Jeremy Wilson	1966 Chevrolet Nova	10.274
2]	David Burke	1979 Pontiac LeMans	10.286

## WHAT ARE THE CLASSES?

**Unlimited:** NHRA safety rules apply; all else is fair game.

**Ultimate Iron:** A new class for 2015 that is very similar to the Unlimited class, but for American cars from 1938–1977. They must be all steel and weigh more than 3,000 pounds.

**Pro Street:** Back-half cars with wide tires (11¼ inch or more) and stock front framerails.

**Modified:** Non-stock-concept rear suspension with narrow tires (smaller than 11¼ inch or 325 millimeters) and stock front framerails.

**Super Street:** Stock-concept, bolt-on-style rear suspension with narrow tires (smaller than 11¼ inch or 325 millimeters) and stock front framerails.

**Street Race:** Stock suspension and frame with narrow tires (smaller than 11¼ inch or

325 millimeters) with essentially bolt-on modifications only. May not run quicker than 8.50-second e.t.'s.

**Gasser:** American cars 1928–1968 with period-correct gasser style, as approved by Drag Week™ officials. Two classes with Gasser A allowing superchargers and Gasser B limiting displacement with no power-adders.

**Hot Rod:** Limited to 1928–1948 American cars with pre-1968 engine family. All naturally aspirated with no EFI and no gasser-style cars.

**Street Machine Eliminator:** No limitations on cars themselves, but cars can only turn in timeslips of 10.00 seconds or more and also no faster than their safety-approved e.t. Top 32 average e.t.'s for the week compete in a bracket race Friday night to settle the class title.

**\*New for 2015: All cars must run race tires on the track.**

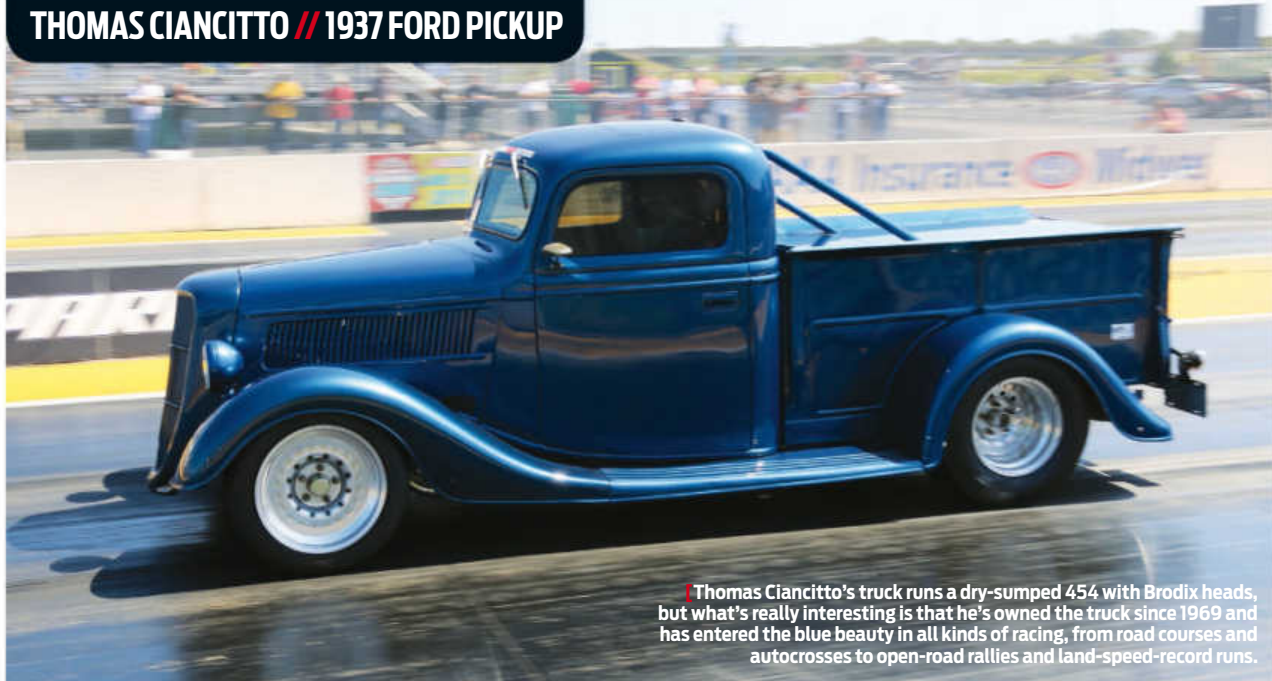


[They might not get the attention of the more extreme classes, but with ax-sharp tree skills and an ability to play the stripe like a Carnegie musician, some of the best drivers at Drag Week™ are in the Street Machine Eliminator class.



## HOT ROD // WINNING AVERAGE: 10.274 SECONDS AT 133.5 MPH

### THOMAS CIANCITTO // 1937 FORD PICKUP



Thomas Ciancitto's truck runs a dry-sumped 454 with Brodix heads, but what's really interesting is that he's owned the truck since 1969 and has entered the blue beauty in all kinds of racing, from road courses and autocrosses to open-road rallies and land-speed-record runs.

## HOT ROD WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Thomas Ciancitto	1937 Ford Pickup	10.274
2]	Tim Hall	1947 International KB-1	10.286
3]	Keith Harrison	1934 Ford Sedan	10.996

Drag Week™ newcomer Thomas Ciancitto's blue 1937 Ford Pickup presented a serious challenge to two-time class champion Tim Hall's 1947 International KB-1 truck, and the two trucks dropped the class average from 2014's 11-second runs way down to low-10s. Hall and Ciancitto sparred over thousandths of a second all week, and while Hall led through most of Thursday, Ciancitto's late-day 10.090-second run vaulted him to First by just 0.007 second headed to the final day. A final timeslip of 10.296 seconds sealed the win for Ciancitto.

Hall ended his week with an average e.t. just 0.0114 second behind, making Hot Rod the closest racing of Drag Week™ this year. We hope to see this duo battling again next year, and if that's the case, Keith Harrison and his 1934 Ford Coupe might have a part of that conversa-

tion, too. Harrison finished his build only a week or so before racing began, and he gradually knocked his time down all week to a 10.860-second run Friday, followed by runs into the 10.5-second range during Saturday's HOT ROD Heads-Up Shootout before literally blowing one of his own doors off during a pass (see page 32). Harrison finished Third in Hot Rod, but could make things interesting come 2016.



In 2014 we were amazed to learn that Tim Hall's International began life as a rusty shell in a field just months before the race. This year he and his father upped performance by more than a second. How will the Halls surprise us in 2016?



After years of fussing and fighting with a Gasser 1955 Chevy, Keith Harrison finally pulled the driveline and stuffed it in a street rod, where it handily took him to a Third Place finish.



# SUICIDE DOOR

## BUILT IN 9 MONTHS

Cut Keith Harrison some slack for not knowing his 1934 Ford might toss a door on the dragstrip—he's only owned the car for 10 months. The last nine of those were spent prepping the car for Drag Week™. The car is powered by the same 700hp, 500ci big-block Chevy that Harrison raced in his 1955 gasser for the last three years at Drag Week™. Power passes through a TH400 backed with a Gear Vendors overdrive to a Ford 9-inch with 4.11 gears—and only has 2,500 pounds to push down the track.



If you've ever heard the term "suicide doors," it's slang for front-opening doors—most notably used in 1933–1934 Fords. Owners of these cars know to double-check that the doors are latched, or the force of the door popping open swings it out like a switchblade and grenades the hinges and the rear fender. It's a major bodywork repair. Drag Week™ veteran Keith Harrison learned that the hard way at about half-track at Gateway Motorsports Park at the 2015 HOT ROD Heads-Up Shootout when his passenger-side door flew open on an 11.317-second pass.

"I'm going to duct-tape it up and keep going," Harrison said. "I just

wanted to keep my Drag Week™ hat." It blew out the door, but he got it back. He says next year he's coming with longer latch pins.

Harrison had been experiencing a fair amount of frame twist—a sure bet that with a twisting frame and body a door could pop open, and it did on his Second-gear shift. "Actually, I think it's kinda funny," he said. "The main thing is I won that round, so I'm going to keep running—I'm here to race." We know for a fact that he'll be here next year, as he's as addicted a Drag Week™ veteran as we have met. Good luck, Keith, and we'll be looking for you at Drag Week™ 2016.



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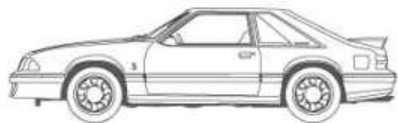
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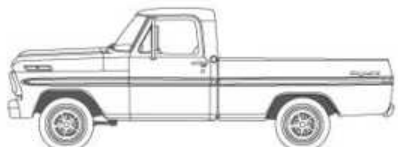
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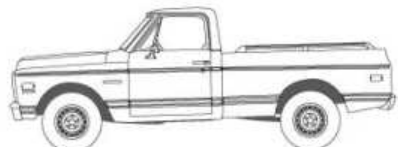
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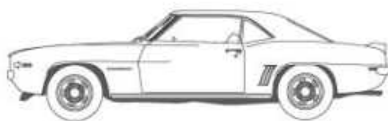
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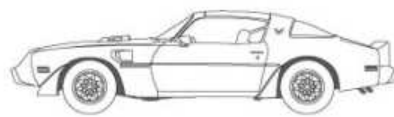


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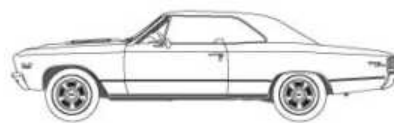


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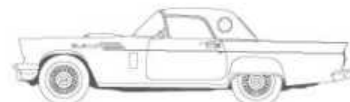
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# GASSER A // WINNING AVERAGE: 10.629 SECONDS AT 125.044 MPH

## JIM FORBES // 1962 CHEVROLET CHEVY II

Gassers remain some of the most extreme-looking cars on Drag Week™. Whereas past years had seen the gassers all run together in one class, this year we split them up into Gasser A, which includes power-adders and some other subtleties, and Gasser B for naturally aspirated cars.

Dennis Taylor's primered-out Ford Ranchero won the Gasser class last year and this year it returned with Noel Brigrance behind the wheel. However, the Ranchero failed to turn up for Wednesday's racing at Great Lakes and the lead instead went to Jim Forbes' Chevy II.

Forbes was running a sealed hood as part of a new non-class trophy for the fastest car with an official seal on the hood.

He would finish the race and win the Gasser A class without breaking the sealed-hood rules, although it's possible he stretched them a bit. Forbes had to replace his supercharger belt twice during the week, but because the equipment protrudes through a hole in the hood, he was able to do all the work without cracking open the seal.

Jay Grabiak's Chevy 210 made 10-second passes all week just as Forbes did, and Grabiak's 10.84-second average put him Second in class at the week's end, just 0.22 second behind Forbes. Paul Nichols was the third car to finish in the four-car class, landing his Chevy Nomad



**01** Jim Forbes might be the only guy on Drag Week™ whose box of spares included a set of points. His 1962 Chevy II wouldn't startle a time traveler from the past, as it's built almost entirely of period-correct or handmade speed parts. "I love old technology, and I want folks to see that it still works just fine," Forbes says. "And I'm cheap."

**02** Jay Grabiak's lettered-up 1955 packs a 427ci Dart small-block Chevy with Brodix heads and a Howards roller cam.

**03** Paul Nichols has perfected the art of living on the road, as his 1955 Nomad has plenty of room to sleep in the back.

## GASSER A WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Jim Forbes	1962 Chevrolet Chevy II	10.629
2]	Jay Grabiak	1955 Chevrolet	10.841
3]	Paul Nichols	1955 Chevrolet Nomad	13.671

# GASSER B // WINNING AVERAGE: 9.520 SECONDS AT 138.68 MPH

## CHISHOLM/STASIAK // 1955 CHEVROLET 210



Ironically, the naturally aspirated Gasser B winners were more than a second quicker than the winner in Gasser A. Daniel Chisholm and Ken Stasiak's lace-painted, wheelstanding Chevy 210 blew the doors off the competition with a 9.5134-second average for the week.

Mike Cox, the only person to

run in the Gasser classes every year since it started in 2011, returned with his Kaiser Henry J. His 9.9684-second average was virtually identical to what he ran last year to finish in Second Place for the second consecutive year. Brian Gebhart's "Barnyard Viper" Dodge D100 pickup truck rounded out the Gasser prizes.

## GASSER B WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Chisholm/Stasiak	1955 Chevrolet 210	9.520
2]	Mike Cox	1951 Kaiser Henry J	9.968
3]	Brian Gebhart	1965 Dodge D100	11.337

**01** Like an old-school racing team, Dan Chisholm and Ken Stasiak share ownership and driving responsibilities of their 540ci Chevy-powered 210.

**02** Mike Cox's weathered Henry J made a great visual counterpoint to the Chisholm and Stasiak car. Cox says the paint was done by Mother Nature.

**03** Brian Gebhart slipped a 440 Source stroker in front of a 727 and yanked a Hurst Lighting Rod shifter to a Third Place finish.



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# STREET RACE SMALL-BLOCK N.A. // WINNING AVG: 9.607 SEC. AT 140.41 MPH

## DANNY ROBERTS // 1980 CHEVROLET MALIBU

Entering the 2015 running of HOT ROD Drag Week™, only nine passes in this class had ever been made faster than 10 seconds. In 2015, six drivers *averaged* better than that, and five of those drivers clocked an e.t. faster than the previous fastest in the class. Combine that with the least attrition of any of the big classes—27 of the 31 starters finished the week—and you have the recipe for not only more close racing this year but for years to come.

Danny Roberts led the class from Day 1 in his metallic-green 1980 Chevy Malibu, but newcomer Jason Tabscott chased Roberts all week with his white 1975 Chevy Camaro. The final margin of victory was a mere 0.015 second, and starting Tuesday, both drivers made laps knowing that knocking off a hundredth or even a couple thousandths of a second might pay dividends at the week's end.

Tabscott's Camaro aimed for the moon, with high-strung engine revs and front wheels skyward every launch. Unfortunately, Tabscott had his truck, trailer, and Camaro stolen from a restaurant parking lot after Drag Week™. We hope to see everything recovered intact so we can be treated to a sequel of the fight for First in class next year.

Kevin Payne started the week running Third in class



[Roberts' Malibu has been in the family since his mother bought the car new, before Roberts was even born. It probably didn't have a 427ci stroked small-block in it back then, though.

with his 1988 Ford Mustang, but the ponycar lost pace and the final podium spot as the week progressed. Defending class champion Paul Cornman barely nabbed Third on Friday by 0.0228 second in his 1971 Dodge Demon. Cornman's 9.8028-second average was a full 0.15 second faster than his winning average this year, yet he was still nearly 0.2 second short of the class winner.

In case it's not yet clear how close this class was, the total spread from Third to Sixth Place in Super Street Small-Block Naturally Aspirated was exactly 0.1 second.

## STREET RACE SMALL-BLOCK NATURALLY ASPIRATED

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Danny Roberts	1980 Chevrolet Malibu	9.607
2]	Jason Tabscott	1975 Chevrolet Camaro	9.623
3]	Paul Cornman	1971 Dodge Demon	9.802



[Keep an eye out for anyone selling a RFD-headed, 427ci Chevy small-block in the St. Louis area. We'd like to see Tabscott get his stolen car back.



[Paul Cornman's 428ci Mopar has enough custom machine work that he threatened to kill us rather than reveal his secrets. We do know that it's a Mopar Performance R3 block, with Indy heads, a solid-roller Bullet cam, and a K1 Technologies rotating assembly.





# From Finland to Drag Week With Love

Having driven on the Nürburgring, Le Mans, Hockenheim, and more than 200 mph in the standing mile, Kimmo Nevalainen from Helsinki, Finland, knows the real action and fun is at Drag Week™. Watching Drag Week™ 2014 from his home in Helsinki, he decided if he could get into Drag Week™ 2015, he would be there—and he was. He registered his 1965 Corvette in the Street Race Small Block Naturally Aspirated class. But a lot has happened to get there, and stay in the Drag Week™ hunt.

First, he tested his Corvette back home, blowing up the engine in the process. So he stuffed a fresh 427ci small-block into it before shipping the car off for a three-week pond-cross to Baltimore, Maryland. It uses a Gaerte aluminum block, 235 AFR heads, Edelbrock EFI, and an intake manifold of Kimmo's own design. A Comp Cams LS-firing-order cam allows for LS firing order, and it's also been converted to use eight ignition coils and a crank trigger, so now the distributor is only spinning the oil pump. The trans is a Tremec T56 six-speed with a McCloud dual-disc clutch. Kimmo runs Six 5 Racing in Helsinki, so building the Corvette is definitely in his wheelhouse.

There was no time to check out the install, so it was finger-crossing time. Then, just to add another layer to the whole Drag Week™ experience, he got married, so Drag Week™ functioned as his honeymoon.

Flying into Baltimore, Maryland, he and his bride drove to Gateway Motorsports Park in St. Louis for Day 1, with things going wrong almost immediately. On his first pass, he exploded the driver-

side axle yoke and U-joint. Blowing it apart at Gateway, a local shop had new axles and U-joints for Kimmo, and just to be on the safe side, he bought some extra U-joints, then spent the night putting it all back together.

On a test run at Gateway the next morning, he blew the passenger-side U-joint. After making that repair, it was off to Indy, but not before confronting a deer. Swerving to miss it, he ran into a ditch and bent the right-front control arm. Limping into Indy, he found a Good Samaritan who beat it back into shape and welded it up for Kimmo. At Indy he ran a 11.33 e.t. at 123.22 mph. On the way to Day 3's destination in Union Grove, Wisconsin, the right-front wheel bearings went south. Again limping, this time to Union Grove, he found new bearings but did a number on the cambered-out front tires, grinding them down to the metal threads. With a used set of front tires, he was back on the road and made it all of the way through Drag Week™. He bounced between high-10-second and low-11-second times the rest of the week.

But there was logistics drama, too. Kimmo missed two different hotel reservations due to booking mistakes. One night, a fellow Drag Week™ participant let Kimmo and new bride use one of the beds in his room. Says Kimmo, "So much has gone wrong, and I don't even remember them all." Asked if he would come back to Drag Week™, he said, "Yes, I'm building a 1931 Ford coupe for my wife that we want to bring back next year." So wrong, yet so right.

## SEE THIS CAR IN BOWLING GREEN

Kimmo Nevalainen wasn't done seeing the USA in his Chevrolet after Drag Week™ 2015. From Gateway, he made his way to Los Angeles for the Optima Ultimate Street Car Invitational, then it was on to the Texas Mile. From there, he's been invited to display his car through the winter at the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Kentucky, where it will be proudly displayed with its trailer and Drag Week™ signage. Be sure to check it out!

# STREET RACE SMALL-BLOCK POWER ADDER // WINNING AVG: 8.608 SEC. AT 158.34 MPH

## CHRIS BISHIR // 1982 CHEVROLET S-10

The Street Race Small-Block Power Adder class was right up against the 8.5-second minimum e.t. for all Street Race classes. On Monday, three drivers parked their times close to that mark with just 0.09 second separating the top four of Kyle Bemount, Chris Bishir, James Bailey, and Rick Anderson. However, the Mustangs of Bailey and An-

derson failed to get past the second day of racing and a bad Tuesday time of 10.000 seconds for Bemount—which ultimately put him in Fourth Place for the week—left Bishir wide open for the win with a staggering 8.574-second average e.t.

Bemount and Bishir met again on Saturday for the HOT ROD Heads-Up Shootout final, where

Bishir's 1982 LS-powered Chevy S-10 again topped Bemount's turbocharged LS fourth-generation Pontiac Firebird, though their e.t.'s were close all week and through the Shootout ladder. If you smell a rivalry cooking, so do we.

John Dodson's blue 1980 Malibu went quicker every day of the week, climbing from

Sixth Place Monday to scoot barely past Ralph Hoke for Second Place Friday by 0.0428 second. Hoke had never finished better than 12th in class, but he knocked more than a second off his average e.t. from previous years. At the front of this class next year, expect to see at least two or three cars chasing thousandths of a second.

[If you've ever wondered how quick a stock-bottom-end LS engine can go, look no further than the junkyard 5.3L in Bishir's pickup. With ported heads, a Comp Cams hydraulic-roller, and twin 66mm BorgWarner turbos (no intercooler or methanol), Bisher's truck has laid down 8.19 at 168 mph. Mid-8s during Drag Week™ were enough to win him the class.



## STREET RACE SMALL-BLOCK POWER ADDER WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Chris Bishir	1982 Chevrolet S-10	8.608
2]	John Dodson	1980 Chevrolet Malibu	8.770
3]	Ralph Hoke	1968 Chevrolet Nova	8.812



[Above: John Dodson is another one of those bad influences who finishes a car three days before Drag Week™ and then manages to not only make it through the week but take home Second Place. We swear it's not that easy.

[Left: On the other side of the brand-new-build coin is Ralph Hoke, who has been tinkering with his 1968 Nova for the past 16 years. It's been through a nitrous phase, been supercharged, and is now running a twin-turbo setup tuned by Mike Roy.





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20

**Hurst Stunner Truck**  
20 22

**Sport Muscle Nitro 5**  
17 18 20 22



**F.R. Mustang 2013 SVT**  
19

**F.R. Mustang**  
18

**Hotchkis H-Sport**  
20

**Hotchkis S-Sport**  
20

**Hotchkis Y-Sport**  
20

**Hotchkis Y-Sport**  
20

**Ultra Muscle Knight**  
17 18 20

### BRAKES

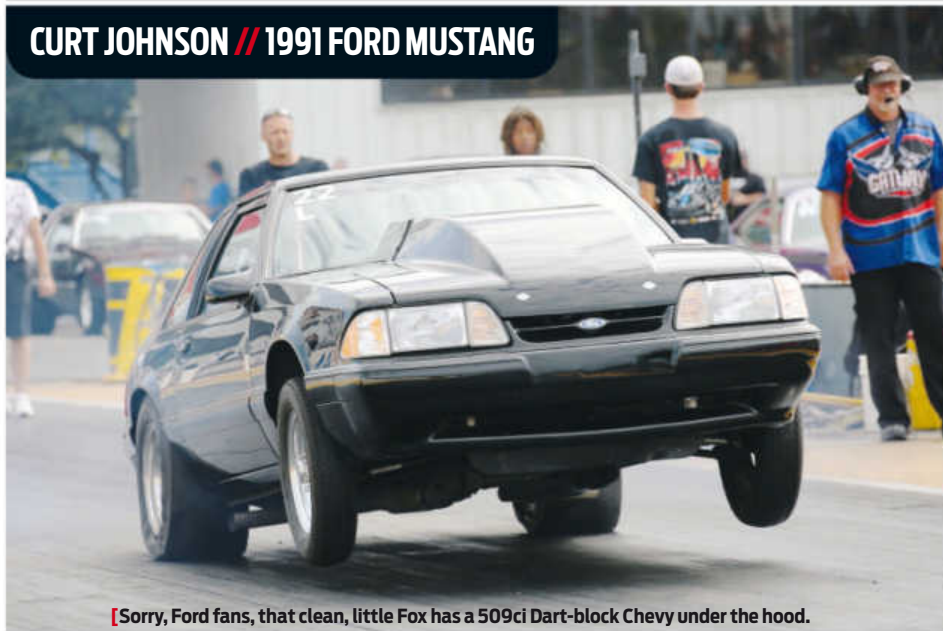


### SUSPENSION



## STEET RACE BIG-BLOCK N.A. // WINNING AVERAGE: 8.976 SECONDS AT 152.22 MPH

### CURT JOHNSON // 1991 FORD MUSTANG



[Sorry, Ford fans, that clean, little Fox has a 509ci Dart-block Chevy under the hood.

Only two drivers had ever won their classes five times at HOT ROD Drag Week™ before 2015, and this year saw Curt Johnson join the elite club that includes Larry Larson and Eddie Miller. Johnson's win in Street Race Big-Block Naturally Aspirated was his third consecutive, and the 15 timeslips he has turned in during those three wins are, no surprise, also the 15 fastest runs in the class. In short, Curt Johnson is as close to a sure thing as you'll find on Drag Week™.

Johnson always turns up at the track before dawn to run down a huge preparation checklist before the gates even open. He is among the first few pairs down the track, usually throwing down a big number—he was chasing an all-8-second week, but came up one day short—and hitting the highway before most competitors have even shown up. It's becoming a popular strategy these days, but few exercised their competitive streak as fiercely as Johnson.

Newcomer Scott Miller was second fastest for the week, and his average e.t. of 9.4896 was the fourth fastest ever in Street Race Big-Block Naturally Aspirated behind Johnson's three consecu-

tive wins. His red 1968 Mercury Cougar has some ground to cover to catch Johnson for next year, but the speed creep of the naturally aspirated classes could mean that Johnson might have someone to worry about next year in Miller.

Brian and Dianne Jensen shipped their white 1977 Holden Torana from Australia to compete in his first Drag Week™, and the Aussie banged out a 9.7044-second average to finish Third in the class. Jensen's Torana looked composed on every run and, like Miller, a sub-10-second average for a newcomer in the class comes as a harbinger of speed to come for the NA cars. Unfortunately for Jensen, the Torana overheated on the first day of road driving. To combat this, Jensen and his crew strapped the hood to the roof, only to have the bonnet flutter away forever into the Interstate 70 median somewhere near Terra Haute, Indiana.

While two newcomers made the podium, it's worth mentioning that Tom Hogshead and his trusty blue 1977 Chevy Nova

ran their 11th Drag Week™ together, finishing Fifth in the class with a 10.4106 average. That Nova is the only car to show up every single year, and while it did not finish in 2005, Hogshead and his Nova have completed

every single one of the last 10, which is an unparalleled finishing record.

[Another big-block Dart Chevy in the Jensens' Aussie muscle machine. Brian Jensen built the 582ci mill in his shed and backed it with a two-speed Powerglide greatly improving the quarter-mile times over a stock Torana's 18-second advertised performance.

### STREET RACE BIG-BLOCK NATURALLY ASPIRATED WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Curt Johnson	1991 Ford Mustang	8.976
2]	Scott Miller	1968 Mercury Cougar	9.489
3]	Brian Jensen	1977 Holden Torana	9.704



[Redemption for the Ford fans! Scott Miller's Cougar is packing a 502ci Shelby big-block with Edelbrock heads, a Comp Cams roller cam, and Molex stroker crank.





## STREET RACE BIG-BLOCK POWER ADDER // WINNING AVG: 8.823 SECONDS AT 159.11 MPH

### DOUG FLYNN // 1972 CHEVROLET NOVA



[Doug Flynn is among the builder/racers at Drag Week™, having put together the 582ci Dart-block Chevy in his Nova.

The Big-Block Power Adder category saw a huge number of experienced competitors—including three different former class winners—mixing it up. When the dust settled, however, none of those previous winners finished even in the top three. Instead, it was Doug Flynn's red 1972 Chevy Nova, which he has owned since he was a teenager, coming out on top with an 8.8236-second average e.t.

Kyle Coy's 1967 Camaro squeaked past Randy Belehar's wheelstanding 1968 Pontiac Firebird by just 0.0194 second for Second Place. Coy's 8.9718-second average put him less than 0.015 second behind Flynn, so it's conceivable we'll see him challenge for the class next year. Belehar had raced a different Pontiac in previous years, finishing with two Second Places and a Third Place. His Third Place run this year in a new car gives him four podiums in six years, but we figure he will be back again next year to search for that elusive first win.

## STREET RACE BIG-BLOCK POWER ADDER WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Doug Flynn	1972 Chevrolet Nova	8.823
2]	Kyle Coy	1967 Chevrolet Camaro	8.972
3]	Randy Belehar	1968 Pontiac Firebird	8.991



[Randy Belehar picked up the Firebird as a gutted bracket racer and made some changes to make it a heads-up radial machine. Within a month, he was winning races with a stroked 400 Kauffman-headed Pontiac.

[Many of the competitors at Drag Week™ take advantage of each other's expertise in the outside world. Kyle Coy's 588ci-powered Camaro has a single-turbo setup built by Jeff Lutz.



## NO SHORTCUTS ON DRAG WEEK

Officials excluded nine competitors before the final day of competition after Drag Week™ staff found them cruising a four-lane highway shortcut from the specified route. It was a tough decision, but bypassing the mandatory route gives an unfair advantage.

# SUPER STREET SMALL-BLOCK N.A. // WINNING AVG: 9.977 SECONDS AT 138.01 MPH

## JEFF SIAS // 1990 FORD MUSTANG

In 2013, Jeffrey Sias won the Street Race Small-Block Naturally Aspirated category with his 1990 Ford Mustang. Sias sat out last year, but this year he moved up to the Super Street class and made it two-for-two with a convincing victory in the category. Like Vincent Rasch in the Big-Block category, Sias was the only car to log a single 9-second pass, let alone average better than 10 seconds in the class with his 9.9770-second average.

Ray Meyers joined one of a handful of early risers all week to run down the track in the first few minutes of racing. Friday found his 1968 Plymouth Barracuda first through the finish line in the day's opening pass, making him the first driver, unofficially, to finish HOT ROD Drag Week™ in 2015. His 10.2056-second average was good for Second in the class.

Connie Heinselman took Third Place for the week in her unmistakable yellow 1969 Camaro for the second consecutive year. Her husband, Randy, won Third in his Super Street Big-Block Naturally Aspirated class, giving the couple a matching pair of trophies to take back to Pflugerville, Texas, for the second time in two years.



01



02



03

## SUPER STREET SMALL-BLOCK N.A. WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Jeff Sias	1990 Ford Mustang	9.977
2]	Ray Meyers	1967 Plymouth Barracuda	10.206
3]	Connie Heinselman	1969 Chevrolet Camaro	10.968

**01]** Jeff Sias was in a new class for 2015, but with the “same 427ci small-block Ford.” He says the only major motor change was a bigger throttle-body/vacuum pump to the engine that was worth around 50 hp.

**02]** There's a souped 6.1L Hemi under the hood in Ray Meyer's 1968 Barracuda.

**03]** Connie Heinselman's sunny yellow F-body houses a Chevy 400 currently packing 422 ci.



# 396 SS, SAVED FROM A FIELD

Of the many new cars that came to Drag Week™ 2015, one ratty, bumperless heap quickly became a favorite of participants. Harry Haig, “Pyro” Jennings, and Brett Ford, a team of Australian drag racers, bought the 1969 Chevelle SS 396 four-speed car for \$1,500. They pulled it out of a field in Independence, Kansas, where it had been sitting for 20 years and got the car running on the old gas left in the tank, thanks to a Holley carb that was sitting around in a friend’s trunk. They then blasted out the rodent droppings and headed for Gateway Motorsports Park, and the start of Drag Week™ 2015.

The 396 ran, sort of. The old carb needed to be swapped out, but the team wasn’t hoping to set any e.t. records—just fun records. On the first drive from Gateway Motorsports Park to Indianapolis Raceway Park, they had an unusual parts failure. They were just past the second checkpoint in Pana, Illinois, rounding a corner in the town at around 9 p.m., when the 10-bolt rearend made a bang that left the SS coasting. The team assumed the spider gears in the diff had shown their way out of the carrier. However, after pulling the cover, Haig discovered that the bolts securing the ring gear to the carrier had backed out. One bolt had even punched through the inspection cover.

No less than six Pana residents turned up to offer help, including a family that brought a jack and jackstands, a local welder who offered his services to mend the battered inspection



Drag Week™ fun, on a \$1,500 budget.

cover, and Darrell Thompson, who raided his garage to come up with a chrome cover and a couple of 10-bolt carriers so the team could grab the bolts. The plan was to try to find the correct hardware, although when the first carrier’s bolts had a different thread, the Australians considered arc-welding the ring gear to the carrier. Thompson came through big time with another trip to his garage that netted the right fasteners that allowed the team to hit the road in time to lend a hand to Jeff Lutz’s Unlimited car before they eventually called it a night around 70 miles outside of Indianapolis.



[Big-blocks, four-speeds, and 10-bolts don’t play well together. Why this farm-field-find SS396 Chevelle had a 10-bolt in it (instead of the 12-bolt it was born with) is anyone’s guess.



## 10-BOLT VS. 12-BOLT

The ring-gear diameter of a 10-bolt is 8.5 inches. The ring-gear diameter of a 12-bolt is 8.875 inches.



## SUPER STREET SMALL-BLOCK POWER ADDER // WINNING AVG: 7.614 SEC. AT 182.97 MPH

### CAL HAYWARD // 1990 FORD MUSTANG

Cal Hayward's pink 1991 Ford Mustang was fourth fastest of everybody on Drag Week™ with a 7.6148-second average for the week.

Hayward's consistency was astounding: The total spread from slowest to fastest run was just 0.072 second, though he was easy to miss if you weren't around early in the day. Typically, that kind of consistency comes from drivers who have run Drag Week™ many times to learn the hard lessons, but Hay-

ward was running only his second Drag Week™, having retired from his first try in 2013 after just the first day of racing.

Clay Forrester's 1993 Mustang also logged a 7-second week with a 7.9622-second average e.t. to take Second in the class. Ford's Fox-bodies locked out the podium in this class, with Kurt Borton's sleeper Fairmont Futura going 8.4524 seconds all week, which was also good for the 11th-fastest average e.t. overall.

### SUPER STREET SMALL-BLOCK POWER ADDER WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Cal Hayward	1991 Ford Mustang	7.614
2]	Clay Forrester	1993 Ford Mustang	7.966
3]	Kurt Borton	1982 Ford Fairmont	8.452



**01]** What kind of man drives a Panther Pink Fox-body? The kind who can lay down consistent 7-second passes with a twin-turbo 427ci Ford. You can make fun of the color if you can catch him.

**02]** Like many longtime racers, Clay Forrester has had several power combos in his 1993 Mustang before settling on the twin-turbo LS engine that helped him nab a Second Place in the class.

**03]** Kurt Borton put together a 6.0L LS2 for his sleeper tan Fairmont. It's a stock crank, Callies rods, Wiseco pistons, PRC heads, and two BorgWarner turbos.

## SUPER STREET BIG-BLOCK N.A. // WINNING AVERAGE: 9.980 SECONDS AT 138.24 MPH

### VINCE RASCH // 1969 PONTIAC FIREBIRD

A familiar face took home the prize in Super Street Big-Block Naturally Aspirated. Vincent Rasch has been to every HOT ROD Drag Week™, winning his class twice. His 1969 Pontiac Firebird ran without a hitch in 2015. Rasch was the only driver in the class to go quicker than 10 seconds. His 9.9808-second average repeated his win from last year, albeit more than 0.3 second faster on average, and his 9.559-second pass was 0.001 second faster than Tim Flanders'

quickest-ever e.t. in the class in 2013.

Behind Rasch, Mark Covey and Randy Heinselman rounded out the podium in Second and Third Place, respectively. Covey's blue Buick GS averaged 10.3138, while Heinselman's Plum Crazy AAR-replica Barracuda ran 10.5854 for the week. If those names sound familiar together, that's because those same three drivers made up the podium in 2014, albeit with Covey finishing behind Heinselman last year.

### SUPER STREET BIG-BLOCK NATURALLY ASPIRATED WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Vince Rasch	1969 Pontiac Firebird	9.980
2]	Mark Covey	1970 Buick GS	10.291
3]	Randy Heinselman	1970 Plymouth Barracuda	10.583



**01]** A 535ci Kauffman Racing Equipment block with ported Edelbrock heads and a Comp Cams solid-roller cam quickly moved Vince Rasch's 1969 Firebird into the top spot.

**02]** The Super Street Big-Block class winners stand out because each car claimed its place with an engine of the same make as the body. Mark Covey's Buick GS boasts a bored 455 with TA Performance heads and a Crower solid-roller cam.

**03]** Randy Heinselman can look forward to another year of domestic bliss as both he and wife Connie get to take home trophies. You'll notice they race in different classes. The purple Plymouth is 440 Source stroker motor built out to 535 ci.



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## SUPER STREET BIG-BLOCK POWER ADDER // WINNING AVG: 7.760 SEC. AT 189.21 MPH

## GEORGE GALLIMORE // 1970 MONTE CARLO

[The sweet redemption of a First Place after a DNF last year. Gallimore and tuner Jeff Ferguson came back hard in the crowd-pleasing monster Monte cruising the 555ci Brodix big block to 7-second victory.]



The Super Street Big-Block Power Adder category was relatively small with just six entries and only three who finished, but the top two in class put on a hell of a show with every pass.

George Gallimore's 1970 Chevy Monte Carlo continued its assault on the fastest-ever e.t.s in the class with his 190-mph personal luxury coupe lighting up faces in the paddock and in the stands. Gallimore did not finish last year, but he made it all the way through the week in 2015 with a 7.760-second average e.t., good for Sixth overall in addition to his first class win. His car remains one of the most spectacular to watch after it breezes past the 300-foot mark, where it suddenly and violently accumulates tremendous speed. After cinching up the class win, Gallimore made one final attempt at 200 mph on Friday, but a wicked tank-slapper before the eighth-mile marker dashed that hope, so Gallimore settled for his First Place.

Frank Saponaro's teal Nova wagon offsets Gallimore's second-half-of-the-track show nicely. The showpiece wagon finished just 0.14 second behind Gallimore in the class for the

## SUPER STREET BIG-BLOCK POWER ADDER WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	George Gallimore	1970 Monte Carlo	7.760
2]	Frank Saponaro	1967 Chevrolet Nova Wagon	7.901
3]	Terry Keifer	1967 Plymouth Barracuda	11.20

[Saponaro is known for building race cars that look like trailer queens, but turn out to be road warriors. His cars aren't just for the track. In fact, the reason he built the wagon was because it was easier to get his kids in and out of for school drop-offs than a two-door.]



week, but the real show came at the starting line, where the Nova regularly lifted its front wheels. After logging his fifth 7-second pass for the week on Friday, Saponaro stood the Nova up at the start line for 150 feet, folding

its rear license plate neatly along the bumper line and then showering sparks when the headers found terra firma again. Saponaro's 7.9016-second average e.t. put him Eighth overall, and we

sure hope to see the George and Frank Show again in 2016.

Behind the two showboats, Terry Keifer quietly kept his 1967 Plymouth Barracuda running. The 'Cuda was the slowest car in the class, but surviving alone was enough for Keifer to take home hardware.

[Terry Keifer's Third Place finish proves you don't have to be the fastest in the class if you have a package that can hold together. His stock rotating-assembly 440 moved the little A-body to the winner's circle.]





## SPEED FREAKS!

When anyone at HOT ROD says a car is a “freak,” that’s a compliment. We love the unusual stuff, be it an imported Aussie muscle car, the “Almost a Chrysler” brand AMC, a common car painted a crazy color, or anything lifted, slammed, stretched, or stuffed with an unexpected powerplant. The only caveat? It’s gotta be fast.



01

**01** Coming a close second to Saponaro in the world of wagon wonder was Addie Ross, back in her 1963 Falcon wagon, now featuring woodgrain and nitrous. Ross went rounds in the Street Eliminator class with very consistent 10-second passes

**02** A car that put Drag Week™ announcer Brian Lohnes into fits of delight every time it pulled in the lanes was Don Foess in his 1985 Chevy Chevette. It’s a 555ci twin-turbo with two BorgWarners. A Powerglide and Dana 60 put the horses down.

**03** A Ford Ranchero isn’t really a freaky car, but Michael Peevey and Ryan Jones’ 1973 Ranchero looks like a junker and runs like stink, putting down 10-flat passes despite Michael’s claims that he’s never drag raced before. He and Ryan are firemen and saw the *Roadkill* episode about Drag Week™ on a slow night in the station. The rest is woodgrain-stickered history. The 4,150-pound Ranchero has a 572ci big-block Ford topped by a Dominator 1,120-cfm carb and encouraged along with a 300hp shot of nitrous. “It’s never been washed except by the hand of God,” said Ryan, pointing at the Ford’s generous dusting of road grime.

**04** Robert Berry was a first-time Drag Weeker in 2014. He thought about bringing his late-model ZR1 Corvette, but realized, “that would’ve been the wrong car to take.” Instead he built up a \$300 1945 Chevy pickup using a 12-valve 5.9L Cummins turbodiesel from a Dodge pickup.



02



03



04



## MODIFIED N.A. // WINNING AVERAGE: 8.987 SECONDS AT 149.16 MPH

## JAY BROWN // 1969 FORD MUSTANG

[If there's a better-looking engine to spot in a Mustang than a SOHC 427, we can't think of it. Jay Brown's 585ci Ford has been offset machined for an increased bore spacing and runs a custom oil pan and dry sump.]

In the Modified Naturally Aspirated class, we expected to see a repeat win by the defending class champion, Bradley Dyer, but three-time class winner Jay Brown threw down the gauntlet Monday with his 427ci SOHC 1969 Ford Mustang making the first-ever 8-second pass in the class.

Dyer ran 8.966 seconds on Tuesday, his first-ever 8-second pass, but Brown still outpaced him. The competition ended Wednesday when Dyer's Nova came back to the pits on a flatbed truck after his morning pass. Since no outside help is allowed in moving a car, Dyer was finished.

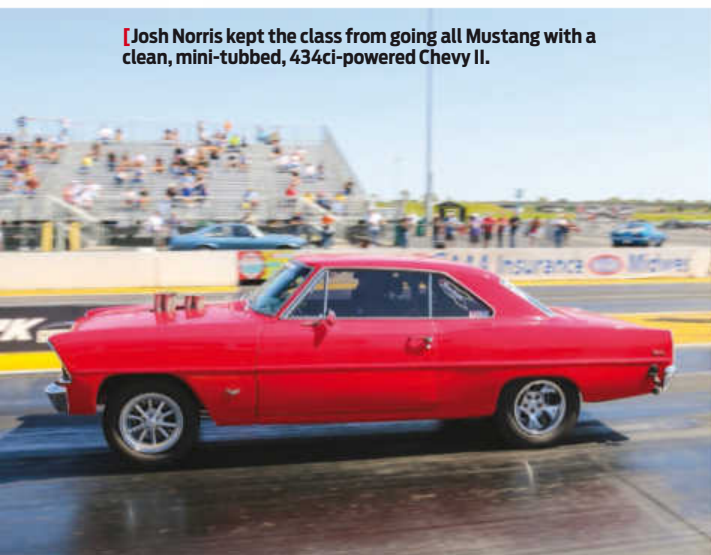
Dustin Gardner's bright-green 1980 Ford Mustang ran confidently to a Second Place finish for the week, his 9.6788-second average ranking as the fifth fastest in class history. Joshua Norris' red Chevy II ran consistently in the low-10-second range to break up the Mustang party.



## MODIFIED N.A. WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Jay Brown	1969 Ford Mustang	8.987
2]	Dustin Gardner	1980 Ford Mustang	9.678
3]	Joshua Norris	1967 Chevrolet Chevy II	10.284

[Josh Norris kept the class from going all Mustang with a clean, mini-tubbed, 434ci-powered Chevy II.]



[Dustin Gardner bought his car for \$1 from his father-in-law. He has a bit more invested in it now.]

## SEE IT ALL ON VIDEO!

For 2015, Eastwood sponsored a live video feed from every day of on-track competition, and every hour of Drag Week™ 2015 racing is available for instant replay. Just go to [YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com) and search "Drag Week™ 2015 Live" to relive it all.



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DRAG WEEK 2015

# **RECORD-BREAKING** CROWDS







For decades, dragstrips around the country have relied on big names, fast cars, and furious action to bring crowds of customers into their parking lots and through the ticket booths. By their very nature, most 1,320-foot main events take place on weekends, with professional drivers, and every single competition vehicle arrives at the track on the back of trailer. Not so with HOT ROD Drag Week™. Nope, at Drag Week™

the audience and the drivers are both part of the big show, and the competition rolls into town under their own power. The only trailers involved are the ones attached to the backs of the race cars. In 2015, the big names were Tom Bailey, Jeff Lutz, and Bryant Goldstone.

At the Great Lakes Dragaway in Union Grove, Wisconsin, we got to witness that connection firsthand. Even on a Wednesday morning at 8 a.m. the road com-

ing into the track was as packed as the staging lanes. People were everywhere. Cars flooded the pit area, and there were half-a-dozen food trucks feeding racers and spectators alike.

From the staging lanes, you could see the grandstands filling up—even the old seats down at the far end of the track that nobody ever sits in anymore. The incredible turnout proves that there's still an audience for the little guy doing big things.



**“I grew up on this track when I was 16 years old, and I’ve never seen this many people in the stands.”**  
— Wisconsin racer in the grandstands at 8 a.m.





## MODIFIED POWER ADDER // WINNING AVG: 8.226 SEC. AT 174.62 MPH

### RICK PROSPERO // 1990 MAZDA RX-7



[Prospero's Mazda looked surprisingly stock. Except for the chutes on the back and the exhaust exits in the nose. And the big-block Chevy poking through the hood. And the green goblin paint job. Other than that, though, total sleeper.



[Pete Johnson built his entire Mustang, from "K-frame to 'cage." A GM Performance 6.0L and two Turbonetics turbos powered it down the track.



[As quick as Shane's "Crusty Nova" is on the track, nothing is more impressive than watching the street-tuned version make tire smoke from a roll with the trailer still attached.

## MODIFIED POWER ADDER WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Rick Prospero	1990 Mazda RX-7	8.226
2]	Peter Johnson	1987 Ford Mustang	8.564
3]	Shane McClelland	1962 Chevrolet Nova	8.680

Rick Prospero made a name for himself at HOT ROD Drag Week™ with his 7-second 1965 Chevy Nova Wagon, which won its class three times. Prospero elected to try something new this year, transplanting the Nova's twin-turbo powerplant into a bright-green second-generation Mazda RX-7. The new car didn't quite knock out the same e.t.s as the Nova, but a week in the low-8-second range was sufficient to run away with the class. Prospero picked up his fourth win with an 8.226-second average e.t.

Peter Johnson made a hearty effort to chase Prospero with his 1987 Ford Mustang, and his

8.5630-second average for the week planted him firmly in Second Place.

Threes turned out to be wild this year for Shane McClelland and his "Crusty Nova." McLelland had piloted the 1962 Chevy Nova to Third Place finishes in the previous two years and managed to repeat the feat this year, though not without drama. McLelland and his crew struggled with myriad issues mid-week, but a blistering 8.130-second pass Friday—the fastest e.t. of the week in the class—put Crusty clear of Greg Mayton's 1987 Mercury Cougar, which fell off the pace on Thursday and Friday to finish Fourth.

## PRO STREET NATURALLY ASPIRATED // WINNING AVG: 9.416 SEC. AT 162.49 MPH

### JAMES "DOC" McENTIRE // 1968 CHEVROLET CAMARO

## PRO STREET NATURALLY ASPIRATED WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	James "Doc" McEntire	1968 Chevrolet Camaro	9.416
2]	Glen Bridger	1968 Chevrolet Camaro	10.516
3]	Billy Gebhart	1962 Plymouth Valiant	10.527

The naturally aspirated version of Pro Street saw one of the biggest runaway victories nearly turn sour for James "Doc" McEntire. McEntire's 1968 Camaro sports a unique engine good for 1,450 hp, and McEntire put that down en route to an 8.375-second pass, the quickest ever for a naturally aspirated car at Drag Week™. His cushion headed to Day 4 was nearly 2 seconds, but his first run at Cordova broke a transmission band. McEntire rebuilt the trans and made it back to Gateway,

needing only a pass quicker than 17 seconds to seal the win. McEntire clinched his fourth Pro Street Naturally Aspirated win with an 11.907-second pass.

Behind McEntire, Glenn Bridger's own 1968 Camaro battled with Billy Gebhart's 1962 Plymouth Valiant for Second in the class. The two ran virtually identical times on Thursday and Friday—just 0.001 second off each other *both* days—but Bridger's slightly better Wednesday made it a Camaro 1-2 in the class by just 0.0296 second.



[It's not a Chrysler Hemi, nor a "hemi-headed" Chevy. The Todd Goodwin-designed, billet-aluminum, 674ci mill in McEntire's Camaro is more usually seen in extreme boat and truck-pull applications, but we aren't complaining to see it between the fenders of a super-quick Chevy.



[There is a slightly more traditional powerplant in Glen Bridger's Camaro, a crate motor 454, all GM specs and performance.



[Billy Gebhart's froggy-faced Plymouth makes big use of a small-block, with a 340 punched and stroked to 428 ci.





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# 1,450HP, 674ci, HEMI CAMARO

You know Drag Week™ is crazy—here's how crazy: Dr. James "Doc" McEntire took his Pro Street Naturally Aspirated 8-second 1968 Camaro, installed a hemi-headed monster motor (that had never seen street duty), and brought it to Drag Week™ 2015 to see how it would stand up to the brutality.

McEntire, the Camaro, and co-driver Jeff McConnel are veterans of Drag Week™—and kinda nuts. They installed the Todd Goodwin-designed ([Goodwin Competition.com](http://GoodwinCompetition.com)) billet-aluminum, 5-inch-bore-spacing, 674ci, semi-hemi-headed engine (it's not based on a Chevy big-block or 426 Hemi) intended for extreme offshore marine and truck-pull applications in the car just days before the event.

## FIRST PASS!

McEntire had no passes on his Camaro with this engine until Drag Week's Sunday Test 'n' Tune, where their shakedown pass was a 10.16 seconds at 164.37 mph! On Day 1 of Drag Week™, they made a single pass of 8.730 seconds at 168.51 mph and then headed to Indianapolis Raceway Park, where he made his best pass: 8.375 at 169.3 mph.



## BIG-BORE BLOCK

The only factory 5-inch-bore-spacing V8s we know of are Packard's 352ci and Cadillac's 472–500ci engines. The larger bore space (big-block Chevys are 4.84-inch and 426 Hemis are 4.80 inch) allows for larger cylinder bores.



The Goodwin semi-hemi-headed big-block has water jackets cut into the billet-aluminum block so it'll live on the street. The compression ratio is a secret, as are any cam specs—other than it's got a nine-journal, 70mm-diameter cam. The engine is reportedly capable of spinning to more than 8,000 rpm. In McEntire's car, it's backed by a two-speed Powerglide.





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# PRO STREET POWER ADDER // WINNING AVG: 7.857 SEC. AT 186.72 MPH

## TOM MCGILTON // 2013 CHEVROLET CAMARO ZL1

Only five of the 12 Pro Street Power Adder entries managed to finish. Among the notable casualties for the week was three-time class winner Mike Roy, whose big red Chevy Monte Carlo failed to get past the first day of competition, but the big story for much of the week was likely Matthew Blasco, whose matte-black 1972 Dodge Dart led the very competitive class for the first three days in Blasco's Drag Week™ debut. Blasco ran a pair of 7.7-second passes before the transmission called it quits on Day 4 at Cordova International Raceway. That dropped him from the lead permanently, but he mended the broken trans and returned to Gateway to complete his first official Drag Week™ with an average of 9.59 seconds.

Tom McGilton picked up the class lead on the final day with his 2013 Chevy Camaro ZL1, a car that was driven directly to Larson Race Cars from the dealership lot. Five-time Drag Week™ champion Larry Larson turned the ZL1 into a fire-breathing drag car with all the amenities of modern motoring. McGilton's ZL1 won the class in its debut, and his 7.8570-second weekly average almost certainly



[Tom McGilton's ZL1 graced the cover of HOT ROD in October 2015 and proved itself worthy of the attention by scoring a First Place finish in its first-ever race outing.

made it the week's—and likely the world's—fastest car with air conditioning.

*Street Outlaws* cast member Tina Pierce quietly drove her maroon Chevy Colorado to an 8.7248-second average for the week to earn Second in class. Behind her, Third Place turned into a real battle with Jeff Schulze just sneaking his blue 1967 Camaro past Stephen Fagan's Chevy S-10 Blazer on the final day by 0.0014 second.

## PRO STREET POWER ADDER WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Tom McGilton	2013 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1	7.857
2]	Tina Pierce	2008 Chevrolet Colorado	8.724
3]	Jeff Schulze	1967 Chevrolet Camaro	9.590



[Tina Pierce's Brodix-headed LSX has a Callies crank and Diamond pistons. Also sparkling is the hand-bedazzled Bow Tie on the front of the grille. "I'm always having to replace the rhinestones," she told us in between 8-second runs. She needs some speed-rated glue.



[There's a 383 stroker in Jeff Schulze's Camaro, rounding out an all Chevy podium.



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**SEPT 12-13** Thunderhill, CA  
**OCT 3-4** Miller Motorsports Park, UT  
**DEC 5-6** Sonoma Raceway, CA

### SOUTH

**FEB 7-8** Barber Motorsports Park, AL  
**MAY 2-3** Carolina Motorsports Park, SC  
**SEPT 19-20** Carolina Motorsports Park, SC

### MIDWEST

**APR 25-26** Gingerman Raceway, MI  
**JUNE 13-14** High Plains Raceway, CO  
**JULY 25-26** Autobahn Country Club, IL  
**OCT 10-11** Autobahn Country Club, IL

### EAST

**MAY 9-10** New Jersey MP, NJ  
**AUG 8-9** Thompson Speedway MP, CT  
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## ULTIMATE IRON // WINNING AVERAGE: 6.954 SECONDS AT 208.04 MPH

### BRYANT GOLDSTONE // 1973 AMC JAVELIN



[The goal of the new Ultimate Iron class was to show how quick the heavy-metal machines can eat up a quarter-mile. Bryant Goldstone took the first-ever class victory with a 572ci big-block Chevy tucked under some custom AMC bodywork.



[Joe Barry's 1956 Chevy weighs in at a beefy 3,450 pounds, making it even more astounding to watch the twin-turbo Dart-block Chevy pull it to 7-second e.t.'s.

After an exciting preliminary entry list showed some big names in this new class, only two cars showed up to run, but both proved to be potent weapons in the quarter-mile.

Bryant Goldstone's AMC Javelin contended with Tom Bailey for the overall win all week and eventually finished Second in the overall standings with a 6.954-second average, which is only the fifth 6-second weekly average in Drag Week™ history. Goldstone sat poised all week to inherit the lead if Bailey hiccupped, leaving Indianapolis just 0.07 second behind the eventual winner. A best run of 7.132 seconds at Great Lakes Dragaway also foiled Goldstone—a former class winner with his 1970 Chevelle—from becoming only the third driver to log a week with all 6-second passes. Nevertheless, Goldstone and his Javelin became a crowd favorite and took home the inaugural Ultimate Iron trophy, also earning his induction into the 200 MPH Club with not just one run north of 200 but a week full of two-century passes.

Veteran Drag Weeker Joe Barry was the other Ultimate Iron driver in his own crowd-pleaser, a creamsicle-orange 1956 Chevy 210. Barry made his first 6-second pass last year in Tulsa and was hoping for another, but he couldn't best 7.037 seconds this year. Still, Barry made three runs at more than 200 mph and improved his weekly average over last year by 0.05 second on the way to a Second in the class and a second-consecutive overall podium.

## ULTIMATE IRON WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Bryant Goldstone	1973 AMC Javelin	6.954
2]	Joe Barry	1956 Chevy Bel Air	7.091

## CONTROVERSY!

We hadn't anticipated run-ins with the rulebook, but early in the week, Goldstone's trailer was scrutinized by tech officials for having too much volume with the race tires and wheels mounted on the outside. It ended up being well within the limits.



# ON THE ROAD



[Ultimate Iron is for steel-bodied cars that would have otherwise run in Unlimited, and the Javelin looks the part under the hood. Powering the AMC is a twin-turbocharged Ultra Tech 572ci big-block Chevy with Edelbrock Victor heads ported by Curtis Boggs from Race Flow Development.

## ULTIMATE STREET/STRIP DRIVETRAIN

Like many of the quickest cars on Drag Week™, Goldstone runs a Rossler three-speed based on a Turbo 400 backed by a Gear Vendors overdrive. Goldstone's car sends power back to the tires through a Strange 9-inch axle with 3.89 gears and 40-spline axles.

The HOT ROD staff cruised alongside Goldstone and Baker for some of the highway portion of the Day 2 drive, and the car seemed to cruise just fine at a low rpm and low throttle position that keeps the boost from building.



[Even Chicago rush-hour traffic didn't faze Goldstone and Baker as the AMC soldiered on during the most brutal drive of Drag Week™ 2015.



[Goldstone's copilot, Brent Baker, tuned the car at each track, adjusting the timing and the boost curve on the BigStuff3 ECU.

## OWNERSHIP

Goldstone has owned this car for almost 30 years.

We wanted to see how Bryant Goldstone's 1973 Javelin car managed on the highway, so we tried to leave Indianapolis to follow him on the most grueling route of Drag Week™ 2015.

Goldstone and his copilot, Brent Baker, left Indy a little after noon and we left shortly afterward. When we met the team at a fuel stop, we noticed the hood was off. Assuming the Javelin's 572ci Chevy V8 was overheating in the Chicago traffic, we asked Baker what prompted the move. He told us they didn't want to burn the paint with the heat from the turbo plumbing running so close to the bodywork. The engine was running perfectly fine.



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**17 FT. TYPE 1A MULTI-TASK LADDER**

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**3 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL STEP DRILLS**

**LOT 91616 shown 69087/60379**

**Drill 28 Hole Sizes**

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**10 FT. x 17 FT. PORTABLE GARAGE**

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## HOW COULD ANYTHING GO WRONG?

The biggest issue Brown had on Drag Week™ was a fuel-starvation issue that only manifested when the car was on the track. He diagnosed the odd electrical gremlin as a wire on the fuel-pump relay that would flex back from the acceleration forces during launch, turning the pump off.

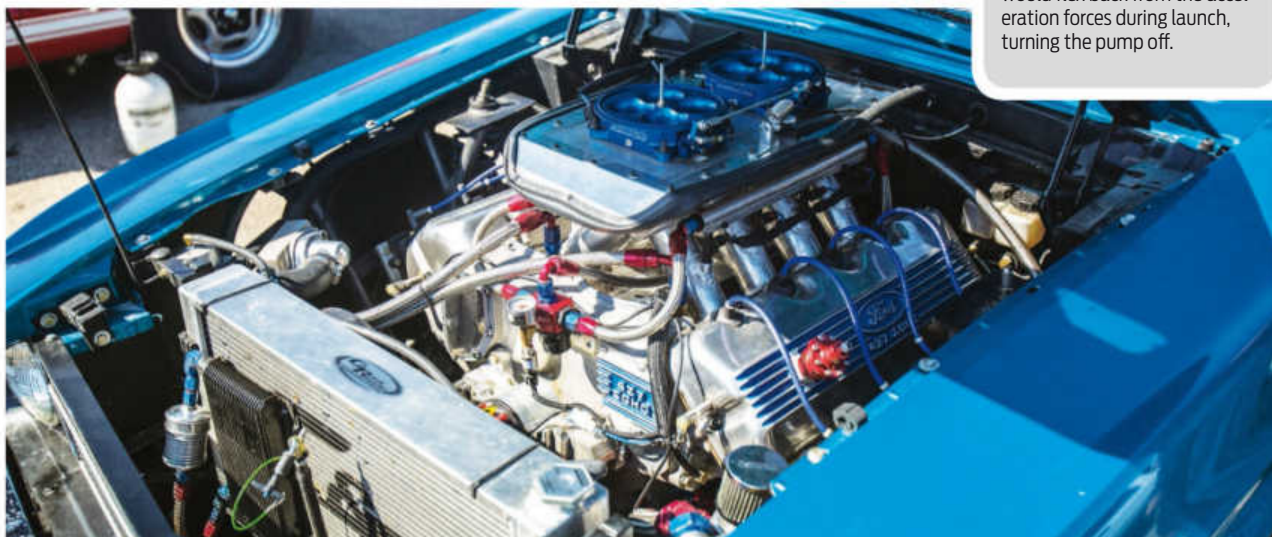
OK, it's a clone, but Jay Brown's Modified Naturally Aspirated class 1969 Shelby GT500 was the only Ford Cammer engine in the entire 300-car field.

Brown is well known in Ford FE circles, continuing to tinker and improve Ford's single-overhead cam (SOHC) 90-Day-Wonder

more than 50 years after the engine was banned by NASCAR and pressed into quarter-mile service with some of the biggest names in drag racing.

Brown's engine began with a block from Shelby that he modified in order to fit a 4.5-inch bore. Because there's no

camshaft in the valley to interfere, Brown was able to run a huge 4.6-inch stroke to yield 585 ci. Despite the engine's size and its long stroke, Brown says it revs quickly, hitting the 7,500-rpm rev limiter on its way past its horsepower peak of 992 hp at 6,900 rpm.





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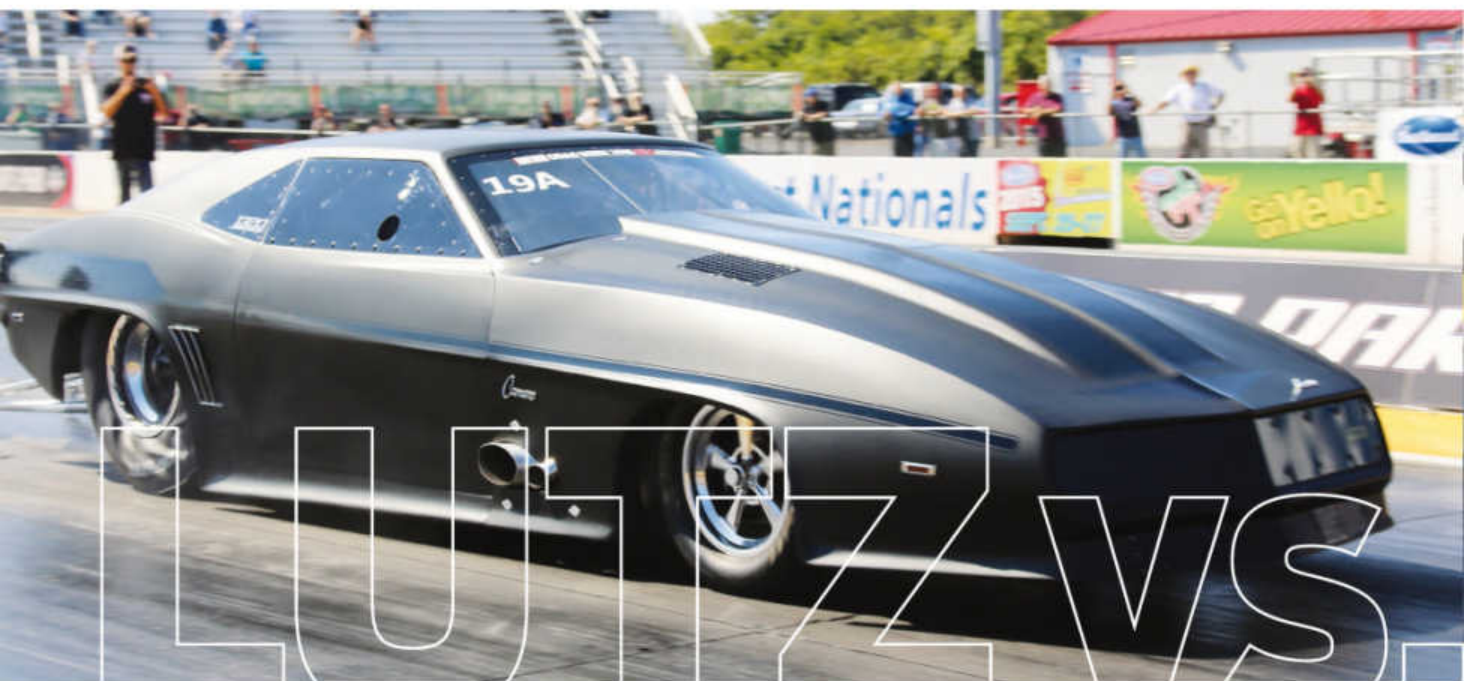
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# Whose Pro Mod Wins on the Street?

What's it like to take a race car that's extreme (even by track standards) and cruise it over Midwestern country roads? We hitched rides with two of the fastest cars ever to run at Drag Week™—Jeff Lutz's mean, flat-black Pro Mod Camaro and its pretty sister, Tom Bailey's gunmetal-gray Camaro. Both men are previous Drag Week™ champions, and both cars were new to Drag Week™ this year.

Lutz's car made the quickest and fastest run we've ever seen during Drag Week™ competition at 6.051 at 251.95 mph, but his record was nullified when he wasn't able to continue racing on the second day. Why? There was a reoccurring starter problem that made co-driver Scott Murray and Lutz have to take the car's front end off and bang around under the headers until the 525ci Pat Musi twin-turbo big-block finally fired up and they could get moving.

At the first checkpoint, Murray asked if we wanted to ride, "You know, for your story," he said. If you've never got into the passenger seat of a carbon-fiber-floored drag car, it's not as simple as just stepping in and sitting down. Most of the floor is unsupported composite, and stepping on

it would have the same effect as slipping off an attic beam and crashing through the ceiling sheetrock. Once in place, visibility out of the passenger seat was great for bird watching, not so hot for reading street signs. The sound level wasn't terrible, but it wasn't conducive to conversation, either, so after giving Lutz a thumbs-up to tell him we were as ready as we'd ever be, we just watched him work the gears and tried not to imagine what would happen to us if we got in even a minor accident.

Lutz's eyes moved constantly from the

road to the Racepak dash to the directions in his lap. If you drive a classic car, you know the habit of regular gauge-checks, but it's on overdrive in these Pro Mod cars. Lutz's read-out reflects his discreet approach to all things automotive. No labels announce the purpose of any switches, and no descriptors head up the numbers on the dash. When the center number—which turned out to be water temperature—started tapping on 220, Lutz pulled over. He'd been concerned about a slow seep from the head gaskets after having them off in the pits, and he wanted to add water.

## ARE THESE REALLY "STREET CARS?"

Here's why we aren't concerned about Drag Week™ becoming nothing but carbon-fiber, 6-second, car-shaped shells: it's hard. It's so, so hard to drive these cars on the street. It's insanely hot inside. The drivers have to concentrate on 50 different gauges and "what was that noise?" and "have I left enough room to stop with my carbon brakes?" and

"will the nose clear the Steak 'n Shake drive-through?" all while dealing with the usual problems of getting lost and peeking over the hoodscoops for obstacles and getting stuck in traffic. If they can manage that for 250 miles every day and rip off 6-second passes, we'll happily let them call their cars anything they want, including "street car."





"You shouldn't wait for us," Lutz said as we pulled to the side for the third time. We left him removing the valve covers, and later heard that the night involved a full engine rebuild, assisted by the Aussie Chevelle racers in a parking lot at midnight. "We can't wait to tell everyone back at home that we built a Pro Mod engine at a hotel," they told us. Lutz less cheerfully admitted defeat. After a long day and a full night, he felt in no shape to get on a dragstrip.

## TOM BAILEY

One of the big differences between Tom Bailey and Jeff Lutz's cars is that Lutz's machine started as a race car and was modified to meet the Drag Week™ rules, while Bailey knew from the second day of Drag Week™ 2014 that he wanted to build a car to run both Drag Week™ and other Pro Mod race events, so he had a full year to put together a purpose-built machine. Nobody would confuse the interior of Bailey's Camaro with a production car, but it does have obvious street-related comforts that Lutz has to do without, like cupholders and power windows. The airflow in the cabin is better, but it's still hot enough to warm a Cup Noodles against the transmission tunnel.

The basic layout of the car is the same. It's what happens in the process from strip to street and back again that makes Bailey's car more street-friendly. "Because it's a legal Pro Mod car, Lutz still has to do the Transformer thing," Bailey said. "He couldn't add any-

thing for the street that didn't unbolt for the track. We aren't swapping fuel cells or computers. We have one distributor, one set of wheelie bars. It's simpler. We've got the street part figured out."

He's not lying. We've been in daily drivers that required more attention than Bailey's 6-second spaceship. He cruised at 80 mph on the highways, and didn't stop for gas any

more than your average 11-mpg muscle car. The only reminder that we were in an unusual machine, aside from the heat and the spine-jarring ride, was the double-take of other drivers on the road and a cautious approach to steep driveways. "There's not really a plan to this," Bailey said. "You just go until something falls off or you need gas."

## IT'S HARD TO WIN DRAG WEEK, IT'S EASY TO WIN FREE STUFF FROM EASTWOOD

Can you type your name? Do you have an email address? Well then, my friend, you can enter the Drag Week™ Best of Eastwood Tool Giveaway Contest, because it's just that easy. It takes less time to register than it does for Jeff Lutz to cover a quarter-mile—and he proved he can do that in 6.05 seconds. Go to [BestOfEastwood.com](http://BestOfEastwood.com) to register for the sweepstakes. Here are your possible winnings!

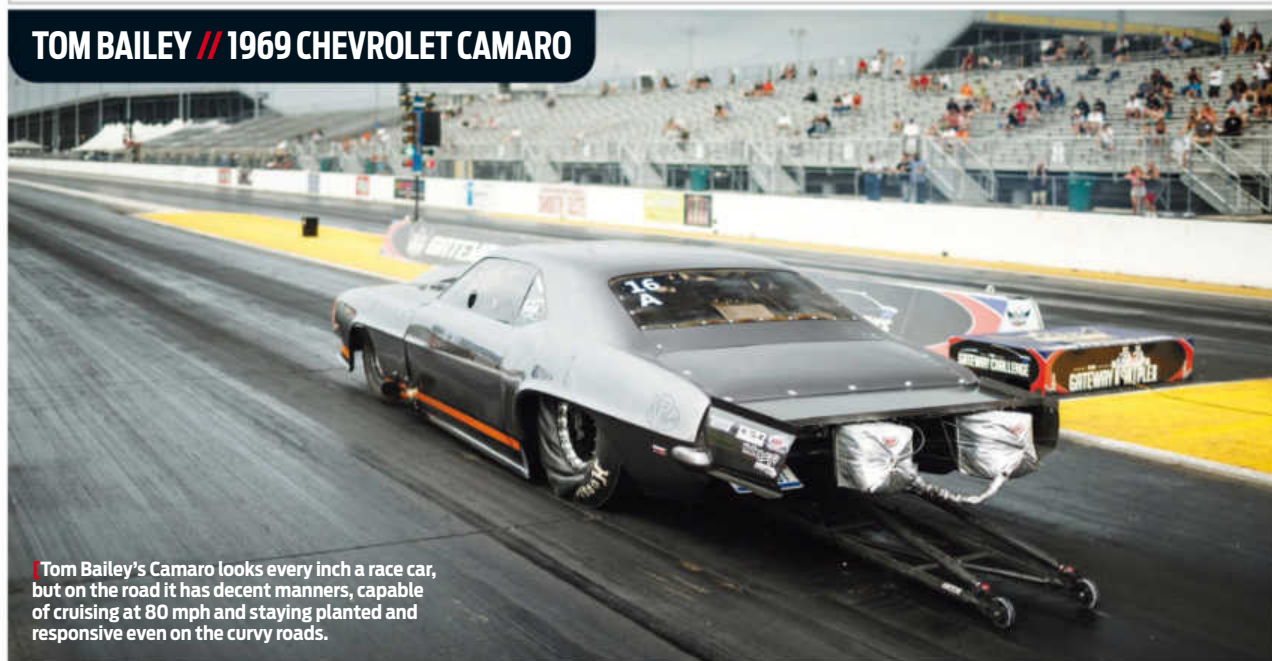
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### PRO MOD MPG

Lutz's Camaro gets about 8 mpg. He likes to keep the speed in the 40- to 60-mph range. Overdrive means that the rpm are lower than they sound, around 2,500.

## UNLIMITED // WINNING AVERAGE: 6.784 SECONDS AT 219.63 MPH

## TOM BAILEY // 1969 CHEVROLET CAMARO



Tom Bailey's Camaro looks every inch a race car, but on the road it has decent manners, capable of cruising at 80 mph and staying planted and responsive even on the curvy roads.

With a couple of exceptions, most Unlimited cars push the boundaries of a streetable race car, sacrificing creature comforts for outright speed to give the chance for an overall win. In many cases, reliability suffered as well, with only 5 of the 15 Unlimited cars reaching the week's end still in competition. The natural question with such an open rule set becomes, "How extreme are people willing to make a car that must survive more than 1,000 miles of road driving between racetracks?"

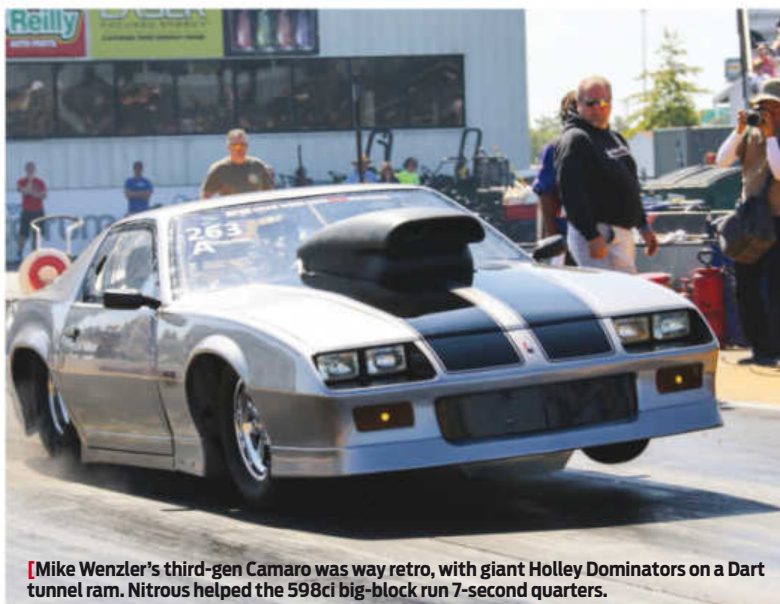
In 2015, former overall winners Tom Bailey and Jeff Lutz answered that question by bringing serious Pro Modified race cars that had been licensed and registered for the street. We had expected Lutz versus Bailey to be the race to watch. Lutz's well-sorted Pro Mod Camaro made a Test 'n' Tune run through the finish line at more than 249 mph, and he backed that up at Gateway Motorsports Park during the first day of competition with a 6.051-second, 251.95-mph pass, which was the quickest-ever at Drag Week™ and the fastest-ever run for a street-licensed car. Bailey, meanwhile, struggled to

get his own Pro Mod Camaro—which hadn't made a full-speed pass before Drag Week™—down the track, settling for a 7.272-second pass. Lutz left Gateway with a healthy lead, but failures of everything from the cooling system to the fuel pump and eventually including a parking-lot engine rebuild meant Lutz never made it to the second day of competition.

Bailey responded on Day 2 with a 6.355-second pass in his Pro Mod Camaro—aptly coined Sick Seconds 2.0—and from there, the only question was, "Would Bailey's Pro Mod survive more than 1,000 miles on the street?" The engine did suffer a valvespring failure before

## UNLIMITED WINNERS

	NAME	CAR	AVERAGE E.T.
1]	Tom Bailey	1969 Chevrolet Camaro	6.784
2]	Michael Wenzler	1987 Chevrolet Camaro	7.675
3]	Nick Plewniak	1986 Chevrolet S-10	9.668



Mike Wenzler's third-gen Camaro was way retro, with giant Holley Dominators on a Dart tunnel ram. Nitrous helped the 598ci big-block run 7-second quarters.

Wednesday's racing at Great Lakes Dragaway, but Bailey still knocked a 6.846-second run from the engine's seven good cyl-

inders at the Wisconsin dragstrip. He trucked on from there with runs of 6.763 and 6.687 seconds to seal the overall victory with a





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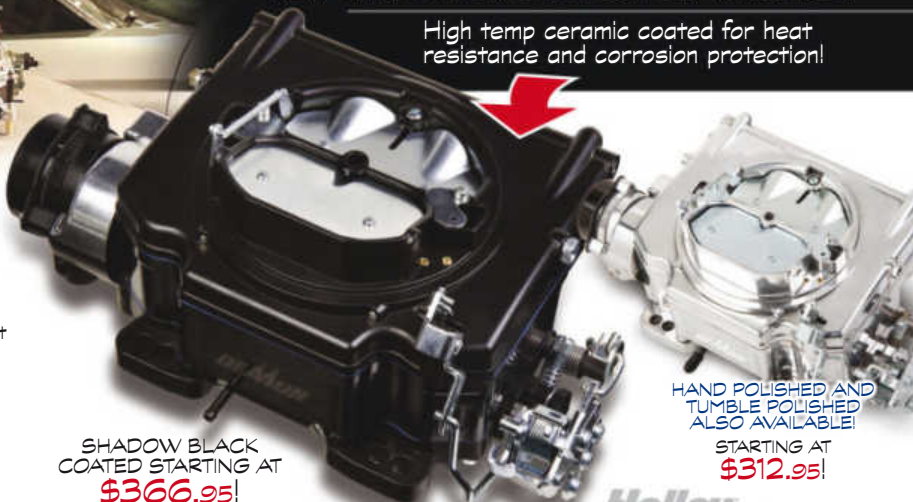
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**Nick Plewniak's S-10 is a great example of imaginative thinking and automotive enthusiasm. The mid-engine machine recently suffered a somewhat catastrophic rollover at a local night race, but Nick was unharmed and already has a new wild project in the works.**

6.7846-second average elapsed time for the week, making him only the second two-time HOT ROD Drag Week™ overall winner and also the Unlimited class champion.

Mike Wenzler took Second Place in Unlimited with a week of 7-second passes in his third-generation Chevy Camaro. Wenzler's nitrous car looks seriously purposeful with its huge intake jutting through the hood and the flat rear deck channeling air cleanly on the way to runs through the speed trap at more than 180 mph. As much as could be the case, Wenzler ran down the track neatly and without drama, logging a quickest run of 7.563 seconds and fifth-quickest overall average e.t.

The freak show Stretchy Truck

of Nick Plewniak unexpectedly rounded out the Unlimited podium. Plewniak's twin-turbo, big-block, mid-engine, stretched-box Chevy S-10 couldn't possibly need more hyphens to describe it, and while he struggled with the engine tune for much of the week, the Stretchy Truck finished, first and foremost, though it is capable of runs in the low-8-second range. A crash after Drag Week™ might have spelled the end of the Stretchy Truck, but Plewniak is OK and we hope to see him back next year.

The retirements in the Unlimited class provided nearly as much discussion in the paddock as the cars that remained in the field. Lutz's son, Jeffery Lutz Jr., retired his tubeframe, twin-turbo Honda Civic after two days of

head-scratching with both his car and his dad's car. Dave Schroeder's 1966 Corvette struggled to get the power down from its massive, nitrous-fed, 872ci V8. Just when it looked like Schroeder had everything figured out at Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Raceway with a hooked-up 7.142-second pass, he broke a lifter and had to call it quits for the week. Ever the optimist, Schroeder returned to Gateway for a full-power exhibition pass on nitrous. The Corvette finally hooked and rocketed down the track on the way to the car's first 6-second and 200-mph run with 6.969 seconds and 209 mph, respectively.

Australian John Faraone struggled in 2015 beyond his Drag Week™ woes. Faraone's beastly Chrysler Valiant Charger

got tied up in customs because of a paperwork snag, starting his trouble before the week even began. Like Schroeder, however, things were looking up for Faraone with a best-ever pass in Indianapolis before a series of maddening electrical problems prevented him from continuing on with his week.

Don Foess' big-block-powered Chevette looked like a mind-bending cartoon headed down the quarter-mile in less than 8 seconds at more than 170 mph, and it became a crowd favorite for that. However, Foess had to head home early in the week to attend to some unexpected family matters. Foess, hopefully, will return with his weaponized econobox and you'll see more of it from HOT ROD.

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02



03



07



# THE FACES OF DRAG WEEK 2015

It's Not Just the Machines That Have to Make it Through the Week

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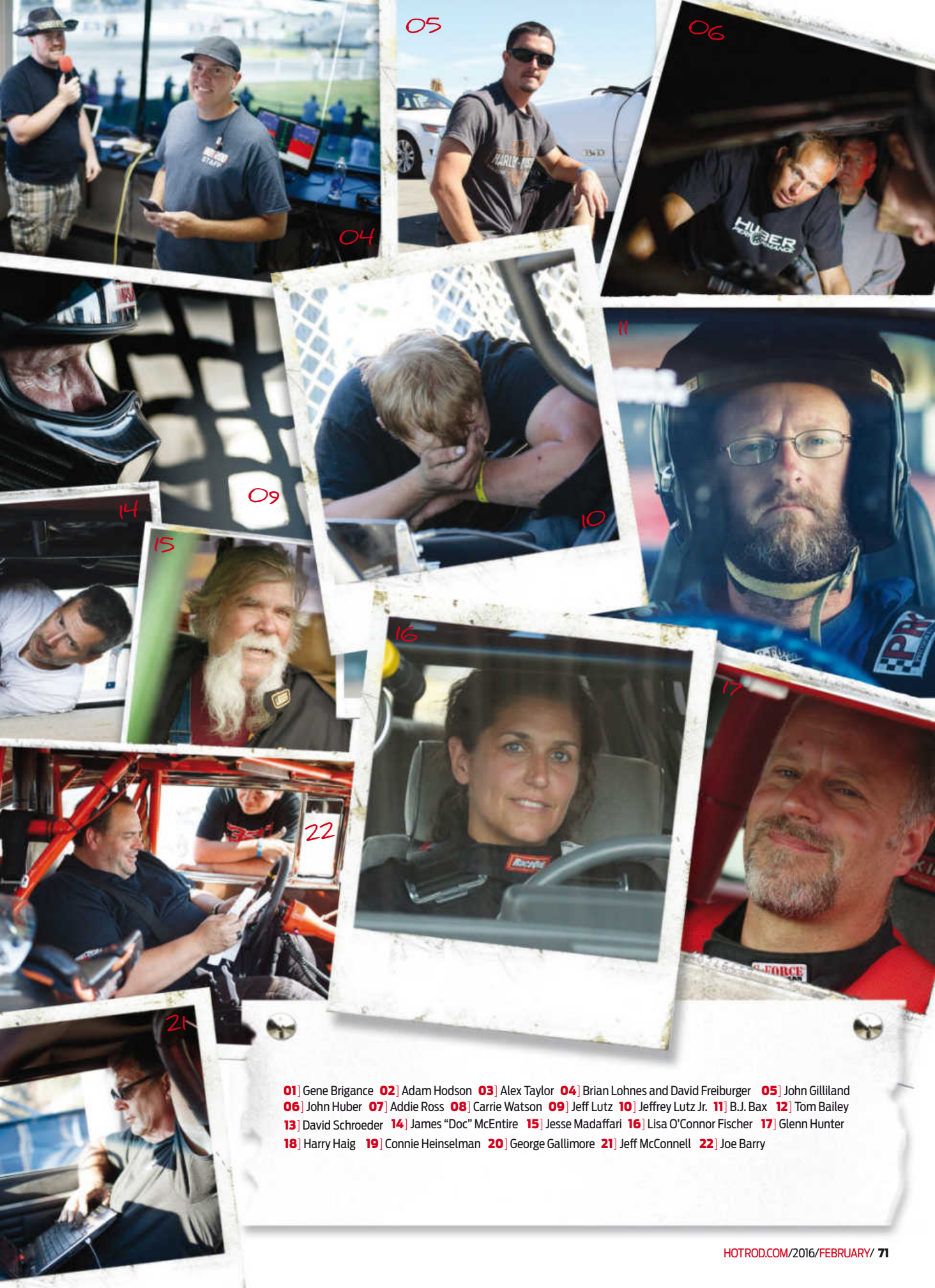
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20







01] Gene Brigance 02] Adam Hodson 03] Alex Taylor 04] Brian Lohnes and David Freiburger 05] John Gilliland  
 06] John Huber 07] Addie Ross 08] Carrie Watson 09] Jeff Lutz 10] Jeffrey Lutz Jr. 11] B.J. Bax 12] Tom Bailey  
 13] David Schroeder 14] James "Doc" McEntire 15] Jesse Madaffari 16] Lisa O'Connor Fischer 17] Glenn Hunter  
 18] Harry Haig 19] Connie Heinselman 20] George Gallimore 21] Jeff McConnell 22] Joe Barry



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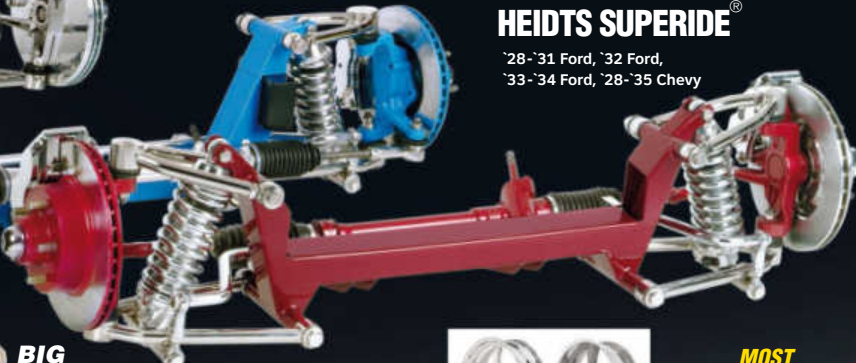
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## Tom Bailey Takes his Second Drag Week Unlimited Title with a Pro Mod Camaro Built for the Street—But He Wants More

✍ Elana Scherr 📷 AJ Mueller, Larry Chen, and Wes Allison

► In nine months, you can have a baby or a carbon-fiber 1969 Camaro capable of 963 street miles and running five drag races in a row with an average e.t. of 6.78 seconds in the quarter-mile. For Tom Bailey, his 3,625hp baby is still going through some growing pains, even if it did just take the Drag Week™ 2015 overall win. “I did better with my old car,” he says, referencing the gold Sick Seconds Camaro with which he claimed the 2013 HOT ROD Drag Week™ Fastest Street Car in America Title. “This year we figured out the street with this car [which they call Sick Seconds 2.0]. Next year we’ll have the track.”

The original Sick Seconds car was a fiberglass body over a tube chassis, but it was based on stock 1969 Camaro dimensions. Other than a few small modifications for tire clearance, the car was sized like a factory machine. It was also very heavy compared to the new car, which makes generous use of carbon fiber everywhere, from the body to the brakes.

“The whole body weighs 55 pounds,” Bailey says. “Paint added 8 pounds, so 63 pounds total. The hood on the old car probably weighed that.” No hood on 2.0, its whole front end comes off in one piece. “It takes a little more space, but it’s only 10 fasteners to remove, so it is actually faster than the hood was to take it on and off.” Plus, you can’t accidentally drive off with the front clip on the roof.

Many of the changes to 2.0 had to do with streamlining the street-to-strip-and-back-again process. “In two clicks of a switch, I can take it from street mode to race mode,” Bailey says. One switch changes fuel systems from the single fuel rail for pump gas to the dual rails and larger injectors set for methanol, and the other switch changes the tune and turns off the electric fuel pump in favor of a mechanical one. A single air shock in the rear can raise the ride height; Afco adjustables do the main damping duty back there, alongside a Strange Engineering 9-inch stuffed with 3.89 gears. In the front, the strut mounts for the Santhuff struts are moveable and a half turn raises the nose 2.5 inches to clear those nasty potholes and gas-station driveways.

While the changes do make the morning and afternoon’s work easier, there’s little that eases the difficult journey between tracks. The





seat is a low, little scoop of carbon fiber surrounded by cage. Gear changes in the Rossler TH210 are left to a Precision air shifter on the track, but on the street it's a clicking, jolting, manual action. Braking needs to be planned for ahead of time. Unlike the carbon-ceramic rotors in, say, the 2014 Z/28, the Strange Engineering carbon racing brakes need some warm-up time before their whoa goes into effect, so the driver needs to be alert. Shouldn't be too much trouble to stay awake, it's not like you'll be lulled to sleep in 2.0. The interior is sparse in padding and full of electronics, cables, parachute lever, and various

Holley monitoring screens.

On the road, the carbon floor and the uncovered transmission heat up like an electric griddle, making you the pancake. Still, this isn't a race car with a license plate—it's a purpose-built machine and much of the time in its build was used to work out possible street challenges. The extra time shows in things like cupholders and seatbelts in the passenger seat. The doors are lower for better visibility and have slick power windows. Bailey calls them "air conditioning." All the switches and dash readouts are neatly labeled. When all is





well, the engine rpm stays around 2,000, oil temperature is in the 200-degree range, water at a comforting 185. The noise level in the car is a constant roar, broken by the occasional slight bog when Bailey lifts his foot off the throttle to relieve a tired ankle or maybe just cool his sole for a second. This car prefers not to coast, and it chokes and bucks whenever the gas pedal comes up.

Bailey runs a stiff suspension setup, even with the rear “street” shock. Every shadow in the road feels like a donkey-kick to the kidneys and actual bumps feel like falling off a cliff. That same sus-

pension works great on turns, though—Bailey takes the curving onramps like Richard Petty on a banked oval. If it weren’t for the heat and the noise, you could almost forget that you’re sitting in a composite shell supported by a ladder work of chrome-moly tubing. Then you notice the response from the people around you on the road.

Construction workers gape with open-mouthed wonder as Bailey passes, and we can’t blame them. These cars on the street look so insane and out of place that the inhabitants of the towns Drag Week™



Tom Bailey's Sick Seconds 2.0 Camaro had done some half-track testing, but had never been down a quarter-mile until Drag Week™ 2015. His best run of the week was a 6.35 at 224 mph.



[Since Drag Week™ doesn't allow any crew but the driver and passengers, Bailey had to make everything on the Camaro easily done by two people, including removing the lightweight carbon-fiber front end.]

passes through must think they're witnessing some sort of experimental military vehicle test, or maybe an alien spaceship attempting to pass as an earthling car. Certainly no one would be surprised to hear that Bailey's car was powered by rocket technology.

As it turns out, the engine is one of the least experimental parts of Bailey's new car. He had big plans for a billet-block behemoth to power 2.0, but custom parts don't always come on schedule, and nobody planned for a disaster a few weeks before Drag Week™. Engine builder Steve Morris was in a nasty motorcycle crash, and while he'll be OK, he wasn't able to stand at an engine-assembly table in time for first runs at Drag Week™. "The engine that was in the car was a test piece, made out of all the parts we'd broken in Sick Seconds 1.0," Bailey says. "We ended up pulling the good engine out of that car and fitting it for the methanol injectors." Other minor changes include a Steve Morris billet intake and Oliver aluminum rods. The rest of the rotating assembly should be familiar to fans of the original car: Diamond pistons, Callies crank, Total Seal rings, and a Steve Morris-designed Bullet cam. The engine is a dry-sump 615ci Brodix block with a twin-turbo setup. "We sometimes run 94mm and sometimes 98mm [inducer turbos]," Bailey says. "We haven't ever

really noticed a difference." Either way, there's always two of them, and they say Precision on the compressor housing.

Tom Bailey's Drag Week™ arc started rough. He struggled to get a clean pass during the HOT ROD Drag Week™ test 'n' tune and the first day of competition, but then on the second day laid down a blistering 6.355 at 224.96 mph, which resulted in the most excited leaping and high-fiving we've ever seen from his co-driver, Ryan Witte. During the week, Witte and Bailey had no real problems on the street, but never quite got the car dialed in for the track performance that both knew it was capable of. At Union Grove, Wisconsin's Great Lakes Dragaway they ran on seven cylinders, and numerous times during the week we saw the tires shake or the brake lights come on early, but they usually managed to eke out a 6-second pass. It may not have been what Bailey wanted, but it was enough to win him a trophy.

"We had an aggressive goal," says Bailey, "and we came to Drag Week™ at the point where I'd have liked to have been [three months previous]. We had 60 miles on the car when we showed up at Gateway Motorsports Park on the first day." Now they have 1,023 and the title of Fastest Street Car in America.



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[No need to change injectors or fuel tanks to go from pump gas to racing methanol. A quick press of a button changes the tune and puts the engine in race or street mode.

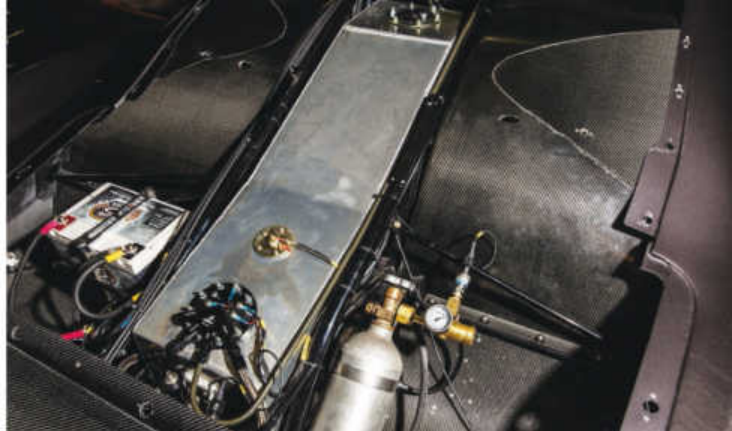


[Two Precision turbos with Turbosmart wastegates and dual 4-inch Wilson throttle-bodies provide the engine with air. Stainless Works stainless exhaust handles the spent gases and drive the turbos.





[Charging and cooling are the two biggest challenges facing the race cars during the street-driving portion. A huge aluminum radiator, Meziere water pump, and an improved fan system took care of the latter problem, while a Powermaster alternator with a new wiring and mounting setup kept the electrons marching like happy ants.



[Not much room in the trunk for groceries, although you could maybe get a loaf of bread and a jar of peanut butter in there next to the CO<sub>2</sub> bottle. The air runs the shifter, the starter, and the boost control.



[Tom's 12-year-old son, Aydan, puts air in the tires and dreams of the day he gets his license.



[Tucked between the 16-inch-wide aluminum Weld wheels and Hoosier slicks are adjustable Afco coilovers and a third leg, an airshock that can be disconnected for the racetrack and put back in use for the street drive.



[All the big-dog racers seem to use the Rossler Transmissions TH210 Pro Mod racing transmissions (based on a TH400) backed by Gear Vendors overdrives.



[Carbon discs bring car and trailer to a stop. It's too much work to repack a parachute after every traffic light, so the laundry only drops at the end of a quarter-mile pass. ☐





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**Daily Driver Diaries Repetition**

Everything is running. Nothing is running perfectly. The Polara has a front-suspension clunk that probably means the wheel is about to fall off, but it hasn't actually fallen off, so it's hardly a priority. The Opel keeps blowing the same fuse, but it's a VW-type fuse, and you can get 50 of them for \$2, so I just keep replacing it. Tom's

Cummins truck is making a rearend sound that indicates more tooth damage than a YouTube video of skateboarding bloopers, and the brown truck doesn't really have brakes, but stopping is for quitters anyway.

It's not that I'm lazy. I have really good reasons for putting off repair days. For example, this past weekend I intended to replace the armrest in the Polara, but there was a spider on the tool chest, so I decided to stay inside. Here are some other legitimate reasons for procrastinating on the fix-its.

- Carburetor can be rebuilt inside on dining table, but car won't fit through front door.
- Have O-rings of every size on Earth except size needed.
- Went inside to look up torque specs, ended up buying NASCAR Sings record on eBay.
- Waiting for shade to cover entire car.
- Now it's too dark.
- Tools were dirty from last project. Cleaned tools, they looked so nice, seemed a shame to use them.
- Bird on roof, judging me.
- Bought new project instead of working on current one.
- Want to get every bit of useful life out of bearing.
- Can't remember which coffee can of bolts has bolts for this project.
- Hoping problem will fix itself.
- Next weekend. I'll do it next weekend.

➤ [HOTROD.COM/Elana-Scherr](http://HOTROD.COM/Elana-Scherr)

**[Stop looking at me like that! I'll fix you tomorrow.]**





# Thom On Design

## Why We Hate Modern Funny Cars



HOT ROD Archives

Recently, we've all been encouraged by the NHRA's attempts to fix some of the nagging problems Pro Stock has been experiencing. Besides their recognition that fuel injection is needed to bring Pro Stock into modern times and that fans can't get near the cars in the pits, they've also attempted to keep the "stock" in Pro Stock by eliminating the giant scoops. So in three areas—technology, fan perspective, and appearance—the NHRA has imple-

mented changes.

Appearance also needs to be considered in the Funny Car class. The Funny Car above was Fearless Fred Goeske's Plymouth Duster from 1971, but you knew that just glancing at it. If we showed you a side view of Fast Jack Beckman's current ride, could you identify what it's based on? No. Should it matter? Absolutely. Why? Because the NHRA needs its fans to be as engaged as possible and be

able to root for their favorite driver, or crew chief, or sponsor, and especially make of car. Saying John Force's Chevy is a Chevy when it's last year's Ford with a new vinyl Chevy grille and headlights ignores a major appeal missing from today's Funny Car.

At HOT ROD, we can stir things up quicker than a Top Fuel elapsed time by praising one make of car to the detriment of another. The love (and hate) mail floods in faster than a Funny Car fuel pump flows nitro. When it comes to drag racing, there is nothing stronger than brand allegiance. Yet with aerodynamics playing such a major role in racing, it's rendered Funny Cars indistinguishable.

NHRA has gone to the 1,000-foot track in an attempt to slow down the fuel cars. What better way to slow them down than to bring the bodies back to what they are supposed to represent? You know that one of the favorite aspects of Pro Mod is their body identification. When will the NHRA recognize this also applies to Funny Cars?

►HOTROD.COM/Thom-Taylor

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# When Do You Need to Check Piston-to-Valve Clearance?

We always advise playing it safe and checking piston-to-valve clearances when installing an aftermarket performance cam—just like Mom said you should always brush your teeth after every meal. But we don't always do what we're supposed to. If you're the gambling type, what are the Vegas odds you can just throw a cam in and motor on down the road without an interference problem? While it's impossible to predict with 100 percent certainty whether there'll be a problem, for most engine combos with piston deck heights no higher than "zero":

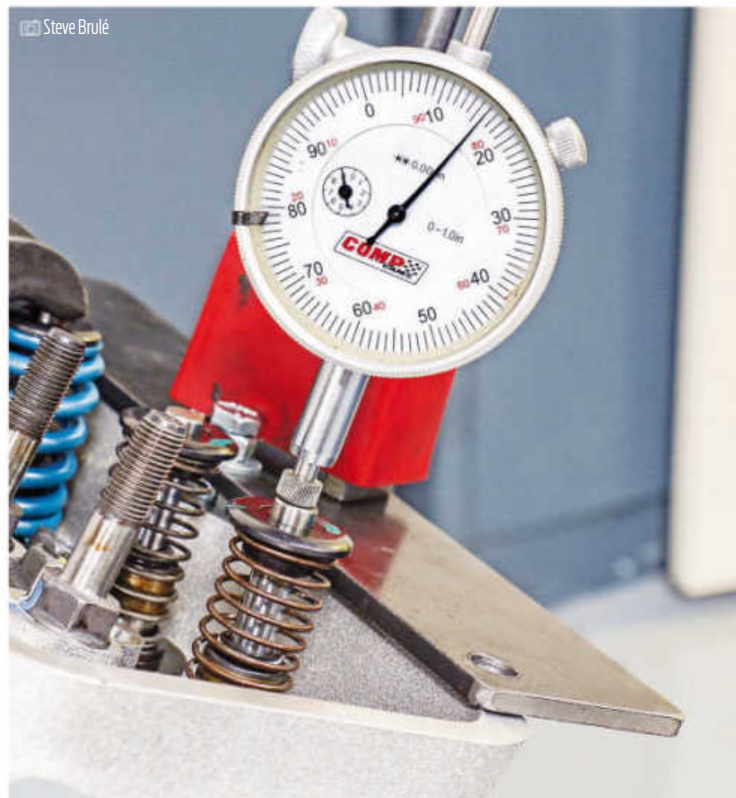
- Less than 230 degrees duration at 0.050-inch tappet lift, about 98 percent of the time you won't have a problem.

- Between 230 and 250 degrees at 0.050, about 65 percent of the time you won't have a problem.
- Between 250 and 280 degrees at 0.050, about 65 percent of the time you will have a problem.
- More than 280 degrees at 0.050, about 98 percent of the time you will have a problem.

Of course, it depends on how big the valves are, how much the heads have been milled, how deep the valve reliefs are, if the valve reliefs are correctly located in the piston—maybe we should listen to Mom after all.

► [HOTROD.COM](http://HOTROD.COM) / Marlan-Davis

**[Piston-to-valve-clearance problems are rarely a problem with cams with less than 230 degrees (at 0.050) duration.]**



Steve Brulé



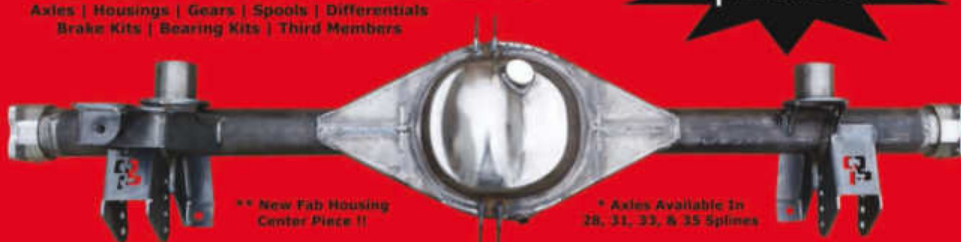
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Lara Searles



Westech Automotive fixed 1970 Camaro owner Duane Searles' ignition and starter problems, but the car still ran poorly.



Externally, the 1970 Camaro looks like an infamous Baldwin Stage III car. But the mild motor and trans needed help.



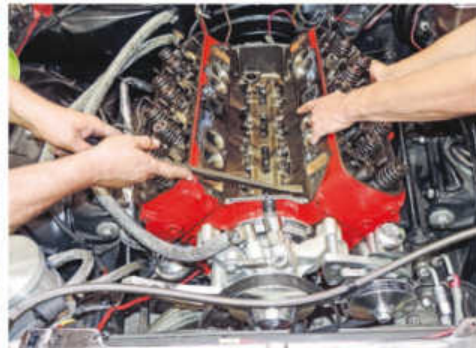
Discolored rocker arms and pivot balls pointed to overheating from lack of proper lubrication. In turn, this contributed to valve-seat erosion.

# Duane Searles' Cranking and Ignition Problems Are Fixed, But His 1970 Camaro's 454 Still Runs Rough. We're Gonna Fix It.

✍ Marlan Davis 📷 Norm Brandes

## THE STORY SO FAR

The 454 in Duane Searles' 1970 Baldwin Phase III replica Camaro was running poorly when he first drove it into Norm Brandes' Westech Automotive. Cranking compression was poor; several cylinders leaked-down at 30 percent, starter cranking power was weak, and the generic electronic distributor sometimes double-fired. It couldn't even complete a baseline run on Brandes' Mustang chassis dyno. In the Jan. 2016 issue, we detailed how Brandes fixed the starter and ignition problems with MSD and Powermaster parts to the point where the car could finally make a dyno run—only to break up around 4,500 rpm. There was also some valvetrain noise, and the underlying cylinder-leakage problem remained. Brandes needed to find out just what makes Searles' engine tick. He pulled the valve covers only to find "blued" rocker arms and balls, a sign of overheating from insufficient lubrication. Now it was time to open up the engine to figure out what ails it.



[Clockwise, from upper left: Chaos from binding rockers popped out several lifter plunger clips. Fortunately, the plungers didn't fly out until Brandes backed off the lifter preload (No. 2 exhaust plunger gone walking, circle). See how pressurized oil is coming out the lifter centers, not escaping around the outside of their bodies? That indicates OK lifter-to-bore clearances. Last month's ignition problems, low static compression, and the binding rockers combined to erode the valve seats. Off with your heads! (We've been dying to use that one.) Note the crude port-match on the late-1970s truck No. 336 peanut-port castings—Searles' RPM Air Gap Intake has way larger runners. "This ain't no Baldwin engine!" Brandes says.

## NEED JUNK FIXED?

If your car has a gremlin that just won't quit, you could be chosen for HOT ROD to the Rescue. Email us at [PITSTOP@HotRod.com](mailto:PITSTOP@HotRod.com) and put "Rescue" in the subject line. Include a description of your problem, your location, and a daytime phone number.



**Westech Performance owner Norm Brandes runs a full-service shop able to fix any ground vehicle, old or new.**



**Comp Ultra Gold full-roller rockers and upgraded beehive springs, plus a performance three-angle valve job, fixed the upper valvetrain.**



**Adding a TransGo shift-improvement kit and 11-inch TCI Breakaway converter let Searles achieve his goal: running 13.7s in the quarter.**

## THE DIAGNOSIS

Brandes removed the rocker arms and pushrods, then pulled off the intake to inspect the valley area. Several hydraulic-lifter plunger retaining clips had gone AWOL. The blued rockers and balls were binding, causing chaotic valve motion that caused the clips to jump out of their retaining grooves.

Fortunately, lifter preload had kept the plungers in place within the lifter body until Brandes backed off the valve lash, preventing a catastrophic failure. Even more fortuitously, Brandes was able to fish around with a long magnet inserted through the oil-pan drain hole to find the clips sitting in the bottom of the sump—undamaged! They were retrieved and reinstalled in the also undamaged flat-tappet

hydraulic lifters.

Lifter-to-lifter bore clearances checked OK. Plenty of oil was going upstairs. So why the failed rockers? Turns out, it was the 454's tall valve covers. "They look cool, but can play you for a fool," Brandes says. "Original Chevy valve covers have deflector rails that drip extra oil onto the rockers. Tall valve covers don't have the rails. With a big-block's canted valves and high 1.7:1 rocker ratio, old-school technology ball-pivot rockers need lots of lubrication, and they just weren't getting it."

As detailed last month, to narrow down what was going on inside the leaky cylinders, Brandes had rerun the compression and leak-down tests after squirting oil inside the offending cylinders. Temporarily improved readings after doing this indi-

cated the problem was probably isolated to the heads or head gaskets, not with the pistons and rings. Brandes confirmed this by pulling the cylinder heads. The gaskets looked OK, but the valve seats were in trouble.

There's a chance the valve-train resonance issues may have caused valve bounce on the seat, but on the other hand, Searles' engine was based on a late-1970s pickup truck engine and even with aftermarket pistons had only 7.8:1 static compression. Brandes explains, "An inefficient engine like this results in a very slow in-cylinder burn. Carbon starts to build up in the cylinder. Between the carbon and slow burn, there's a lot of heat late in the firing cycle. This heats up the exhaust valve seat and the face of the valve. The valve gets sticky. The entire face of the valve is no

longer contacting the seat. The valve seat starts to erode. Now exhaust gas is bypassing through the valve, and everything starts to feed on itself. Cylinder pressure drops, the burn isn't complete—everything gets worse and worse."

## THE FIX: HEADS

Again, Searles was relatively lucky. He had gotten to Westech Automotive in time to prevent a serious engine seizure. The valve seats hadn't failed outright and all valves were salvageable. A good, three-angle valve job and new valve-stem seals and the heads were good to go. Well, as good to go as a set of lazy truck peanut-port heads could be, so Brandes reassembled the motor's top-end using Fel-Pro gaskets.

## THE FIX: VALVETRAIN

There's a simple fix for keeping those cool, tall valve covers yet still preserve upper valvetrain longevity. Don't use ball-pivot rockers; instead, upgrade to full-roller rockers with an integral bearing trunnion that don't need a constant, directed oil stream to stay alive. In went a set of Comp Cams' Ultra Gold 1.7:1 rockers. Exercising due diligence, Brandes also replaced the Camaro's slightly weak, used, conventional dual valvesprings with Comp Cam's latest beehive springs. "They have a little bit more pressure for additional control," Brandes explains. "We've had good luck with this spring in a variety of applications."



**The eroded valve seats were still salvageable—nothing that a good three-angle performance valve job in the Serdi couldn't fix.**



**Valveguide deposits (arrow) caused some valve stems to bind in the guides, but neither the valves nor the guides were fatally damaged. The stems were simply repolished.**

“My goal was to get into the 13s, and we have got there. And now the car is safe for my wife to drive every day.”

—Duane Searles



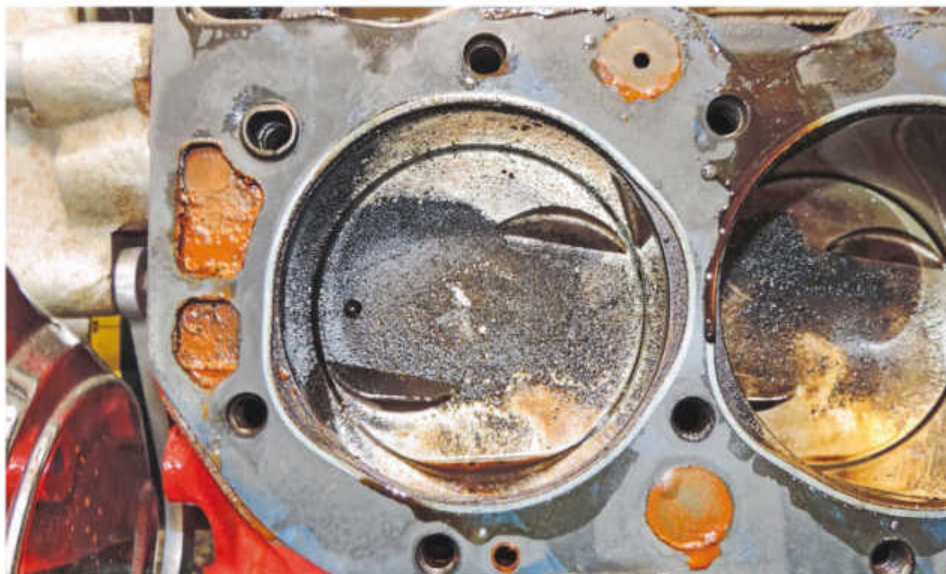
## THE FIX: TUNE-UP

After addressing the upper valvetrain and leaky valve issues, cranking compression rose into the 150- to 155-psi range, which Brandes considers marginally acceptable for a performance engine. Leakdown improved to 5–6 percent. Brandes put the car back on the chassis dyno and went through the usual minor carburetor and ignition tweaks. With the new high-output MSD ignition, he was able to reduce initial timing to 12–14 degrees, compared to the previous lazy ignition that needed 16–18 degrees. The engine was happiest with 36 degrees total advance, all in by 3,200 rpm. Searles' Holley 850-cfm double-pumper carb was slightly rich, so Brandes went from No. 86 primary jets to No. 80s, and from No. 78 to No. 76 secondary jets. After tuning, rear-wheel power rose from 261 to 284 hp. Not great, but what can you expect from peanut-port heads and low compression?

## DRAGSTRIP RUNS AND FINAL FIXES

One of Searles' objectives—assuming the Camaro's engine ills were sorted out—was to break into the 13s in the quarter-mile. Running on the chassis dyno after the engine fixes and tune-up, Brandes says he noticed “the [transmission torque] converter lacked stall; it seemed sluggish. We verified the transmission line pressure. It was OK, but we had Shepherds Transmissions throw a TransGo shift kit in it to make sure there was no slippage before heading out to the drags.”

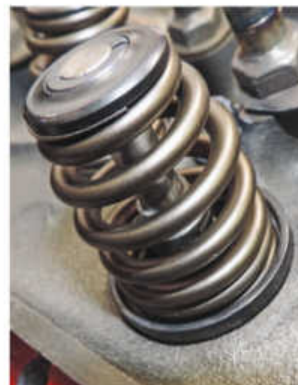
But running corked-up through its restrictive side pipes at Great Lakes Dragway, the Camaro couldn't do better than 15s on street tires, with a dismal 2.5-second 60-foot time. Brandes explains, “We were now certain the torque converter didn't have the right stall speed. Basically, the vehicle just laid down and wouldn't flash to enough rpm to not lug off the line. It was worse than a stocker.”



**[Several piston tops had significant carbon buildup. Among the worst was the No. 1 cylinder, which originally leaked-down at 30 percent. Brandes says the 454's low, 7.8:1, static compression results in a cooler, slow-burning chamber that promotes deposit formation.]**



**[After decarbonizing the piston tops with brake cleaner, Brandes reinstalled the heads using Fel-Pro Marine composition head gaskets. “We entertained a steel-shim head gasket to get a little more compression, but we hadn't surfaced the block or heads,” Brandes explains. “When you're at 7.8:1 [compression], you can throw the cat in there and never solve the problem.”]**



**[The truck heads had extra-deep spring pockets for factory valve rotators (not used in a high-perf app). Properly supporting Comp's new smaller, 1.5-inch-od beehives mandated thick, shouldered, spring-seat spacers and—to get the right installed height—a +0.050-inch offset valve lock. It's perfectly stable as long as the valve-stem tip ends up higher than the locks.]**



**[Original GM valve covers like this one had internal oil-distribution rails. Searles' tall aftermarket valve covers didn't. With a Rat motor's canted valves and high 1.7:1 rocker ratio, ball-pivot rockers need these rails to survive.]**





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For a street car, dropping the 60-foot time generates the greatest proportional improvements. With mild street gears like those in Searles' 3.08:1 open-diff 10-bolt, getting the right converter is critical for accomplishing this, so Brandes installed TCI's 11-inch Breakaway-series unit. The Breakaway is a great torque converter for moderately modified street machines and weekend racers that are also used as daily drivers. It provides approximately 2,400–2,600-rpm flash stall without negatively affecting part-throttle driveability.

The Breakaway dropped 60-foot times by 0.37 seconds and improved quarter-mile e.t. about 1.4 seconds. The car was now running 13.70s. But then Searles' timing started jumping around. Turns out the outer inertia ring on the old OE-damper was starting to delaminate. We can't have that, so Brandes upgraded to a TCI SFI 18.1-certified Rattler damper.

## THE RESULTS

All Searles' complaints were fixed—and then some—with the car reaching Searles' sub-14-second quarter-mile e.t. goal. On the other hand, a “real” 1970s-era Baldwin Camaro ran 11.70-second quarter-miles. Hot rodders always want more, so we're sitting around brainstorming what it would take to get the car into the 11s. Back in the day, high-octane gas allowed high-compression ratios, and no one minded driving around on 4.88:1 axle ratios. On the other hand, technology has evolved, with much better camshaft and cylinder-head tech available. Brandes believes the goal can be accomplished running on pump gas with a relatively mild, torque-monster engine generating at least 550 hp, using mild rear gears in the 3.50–3.70:1 range. But readers, we're open to suggestion. Should we go ahead and turn a sheep in wolf's clothing into a howling-mad wolf?



[Not so with aftermarket full-roller arms that have integral, needle-bearing trunnions that require much less lubricating oil. Comp Cams Ultra Gold rocker arms were the solution for Searles, allowing him to keep the cool covers. With the 454's hydraulic-roller cam, they're adjusted to zero lash plus  $\frac{3}{4}$  turn.



[TransGo's classic GM TH350 auto trans reprogramming kit (PN 350-1&2) raises line pressure for firmer, more positive shifts. It also permits the trans to upshift or downshift in any gear at any rpm. There are three stages: Tow, Go, and Competition. Which one do you think we picked? The kit installs easily without removing the trans.

TCI Automotive



[Designed for both efficiency at highway cruise speeds and hard launches at wide-open-throttle, TCI's 11-inch Breakaway torque converter is a great dual-purpose street/strip choice. The beefy unit features furnace-brazed fins, needle bearings, a hardened, pre-ground pump hub, and computer balancing. It helped dramatically improve the Camaro's 60-foot times.

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[Finally, Westech axed the 454's delaminating OE harmonic balancer for a TCI Rattler unit and adjustable billet timing pointer. Rattlers feature steel rollers that fit loosely into a specific number of holes. Based on an exact, patented, mathematical relationship, the rollers roll forward during the compression stroke and backward during the power stroke to minimize engine speed variation and vibration.



Photo: Searles

[Searles' 454 can now run in the 13.70s. But that's 2 seconds shy of a "real" Stage III Baldwin Camaro, which was guaranteed to run 11.70 e.t.'s or your money back. Getting there really points to a new engine build plus other drivetrain improvements. Where should we go from here?

## Contacts

**AMAZON.COM INC.;** Seattle, WA;  
866.216.1072; [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**CHAMPION BRANDS LLC;** Clinton, MO;  
800.821.5693 or 660.885.8151;  
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**COMP CAMS;** Memphis, TN;  
800.999.0853 or 901.795.2400;  
[CompCams.com](http://CompCams.com)

**FEL-PRO—SPEED-PRO (FEDERAL-MOGUL CORP.);** Southfield, MI;  
800.325.8886; [FMe-cat.com](http://FMe-cat.com)

**GREAT LAKES DRAGWAY;** Union Grove, WI; 262.878.3783; [GreatLakesDragway.com](http://GreatLakesDragway.com)

**HOLLEY PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS;** Bowling Green, KY; 800.HOLLEY1 (nearest dealer), 270.781.9741 (tech), or 270.782.2900 (general); [Holley.com](http://Holley.com)

**NATIONAL AUTOMOTIVE PARTS ASSOCIATION (NAPA);** Atlanta, GA;  
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**ROCKAUTO LLC;** Madison, WI;  
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## LESSONS LEARNED

You can't judge a car by its paint job. Essentially, the Camaro had a late-1970s truck 454 low-

compression smog motor with a hotter cam. Still, the 1.4-second e.t. improvement shows how a mild refresh and judicious parts selection can yield a significant performance improvement. Also instructive is how a seemingly

minor parts detail (such as no valve-cover drip rails) can set in motion a chain of problems. "If you go at just trying to fix one thing, you'll never get the job done," Brandes says.

## PHASE 2 PARTS AND PRICES

Includes the major parts used in Phase 2 (this article) required to fix the problem. For Phase 1 parts list, see the Jan. 2016 issue. Labor is listed only for machining operations the average home mechanic cannot generally perform in his garage. Does not include any shipping charges, sales taxes, or miscellaneous small bolts, hardware, and plumbing. All dimensions are in linear inches, except as noted. Phase 2 priced 09/27/2015 and subject to change.

BRAND	PART DESCRIPTION	PART NO.	AMT.	PRICE	
				SOURCE	COST
CHAMPION	CLEANING SOLUTION, brake, nonchlorinated, 15oz spray-can	45251	1	Summit	\$4.45
COMP CAMS	ARM KIT, valve rocker, Ultra-Gold full-roller, big-block Chevy, 1.7:1 ratio	19021-16	1	Summit	\$317.97
	SPACER KIT, valvespring seat, 0.300-thk x 1.568-spring ID x 1.732 locator od (8/pack)	4779-2	2	Summit	\$53.94
	LOCK KIT, valvespring retainer, 10° Super Lock, 3/8 valve stem, 1 groove, +0.050 offset (32/pack)	616-16	1	Summit	\$23.97
	RETAINER KIT, steel, 10°, 1.039 od x 0.640 id, for beehive spring PN 26120-16	795-16	1	Summit	\$54.97
	SHIM, valvespring, steel, hardened, for 1.5od springs, 0.015/0.030/0.060-thk (48/pack)	4767	1	Summit	\$20.97
	VALVESPRING KIT, beehive, 1.445 od, 130-lb/in rate, 1.230 coil-bind height	26120-16	1	Summit	\$202.97
FEL-PRO	GASKET SET, intake manifold, composite, big-block Chevy, oval port	MS902402	1	Summit	\$9.97
	GASKET SET, valve cover, big-block Chevy, molded silicone rubber w/ steel core	1635	1	Summit	\$39.97
HOLLEY	GASKET, cylinder head, Printoseal, Marine, big-block Chevy, 4.370 bore x 0.039 compressed thickness	17046	2	Summit	\$95.94
	JET, carburetor main metering, 1/4-32 UNEF thread, No. 76, 0.0840 hole size, 1 pair (for primary side)	122-76	1	Summit	\$7.36
NAPA	JET, carburetor main metering, 1/4-32 UNEF thread, No. 80, 0.0890 hole size, 1 pair (for secondary side)	122-80	1	Summit	\$7.36
	COOLANT, engine, regular green, full strength, 1 gallon container	NAF 1GAL	1	NAPA	\$8.99
SPEED-PRO	SEAL, valve stem, PTFE, 0.341 stem od, 0.531 guide ID	ST-2019R	16	Summit	\$31.84
TCI	BALANCER, crankshaft, Rattler, Chevy 454, external balance, 7.920 od, black, degreed, SFI certified	870006	1	Summit	\$392.97
	CONVERTER ASSY., transmission, Breakaway, 11 od, GM 1965-1991 TH350/400 w/ dual bolt-pattern, 2,400-2,600-rpm stall	240900	1	Summit	\$329.97
	POINTER, engine timing, Rattler, 4° adjustable, billet aluminum, black anodized w/ stainless steel fasteners, for big-block Chevy 8 od balancer	871006	1	Summit	\$41.97
TRANSO	REPROGRAMMING KIT, automatic transmission, 1969-up GM TH350	350-1&2	1	Summit	\$43.97
VALVOLINE	FLUID, automatic transmission, conventional, Dexron III/Mercon-compatible, 1-gal. (4qt) container*	773636	3	NAPA	\$59.07
	OIL, engine, conventional, VRI racing high ZDDP, 20W-50, 1qt bottle (6/case)	VV211-6PK	1	Amazon	\$31.95
WESTECH	LABOR & MACHINING OPERATION, valve job, 3-angle	—	1	Westech	\$225.00
WIX	FILTER, engine oil, spin-on canister, 4.338 h x 3.660 od, 3/16-16 thread, 21 micron, 225-psi burst	51069	1	RockAuto	\$4.15

\*8-10 quarts generally required for complete transmission and torque-converter fill.

SUBTOTAL PHASE 2 (CURRENT ISSUE)	\$2,010.72
SUBTOTAL PHASE 1 (01/16 ISSUE)	\$1,337.69
TOTAL PHASE 1 + PHASE 2	\$3,348.41



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Stephin Hawkin Asks...

# Can a 1969 Nova Temperature Warning Light Be Made to Work with Late-Model Heads?

 Marlan Davis

Q:

I have a customer with a 1969 Nova 307. He bought an ATK engine with aluminum heads. He would like to keep the “idiot” light and do an aftermarket gauge. The gauge is no problem, but the light might be. Late-model heads have a small hole for the temperature sender; the 307ci V8 had a large hole. Also, the 307 had a two-prong sender; I’m used to a one-prong or button sender. What sender might work with the late heads and keep the idiot light?

A:

That two-prong sender is an anomaly. Nearly all GM cars from at least the late-1960s well into the 1980s had a one-terminal temperature switch. That includes the 1969 Nova. There were some early-to-mid-1960s GM two-terminal switch applications, but this was a unique dual-idiot-light setup that indicated whether the temperature was too low or too high.

As Wells Vehicle Electronics tech Mark Hicks points out, a switch for a factory “gauge car” is not the same as a switch for a car equipped with a warning light. A gauge switch has a built-in thermistor to generate the resistance needed to properly actuate the gauge and achieve the correct low/high needle sweep. A standard warning-light sending nonthermistor switch can’t be used with a gauge, and a switch for a gauge can’t be used to operate a warning light.

Nevertheless, at least in the GM OE world, both standard single-bulb warning-light and gauge switches have just one terminal. Depending on the application, model, manufacturer, and various supersessions through the years, the switch terminal could either be a male blade, a pin, or a button. Some replacements even include a hybrid connector to convert one style to another.

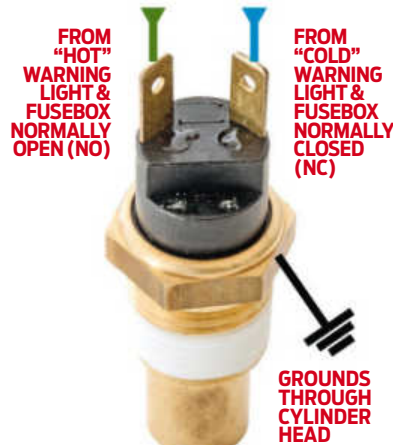
Because of all the supersessions over the years, it is possible that gauge or warning-light switches have become mixed up. A thermistor switch as used for a gauge, will show infinite resistance on an ohm meter when the switch is cold. As temp goes up, the switch resistance actually declines (kind of backward in terms of how most electrical circuits are troubleshoot). At any rate, on a hot gauge resistance will check at, or near, zero. A switch for a warning light (no thermistor) will always show



[Late-model and aftermarket small-block Chevy cylinder heads are typically machined with downsized  $\frac{3}{8}$ -18 NPT sender holes. Original muscle-car-era senders with  $\frac{1}{2}$ -14 NPT threads (left) won’t screw directly into the downsized threads. However, Longacre Racing offers a downsized switch with the small threads that closes at 230 degrees (PN 43252, right).



[Most GM cars and trucks use a single-terminal normally open (NO) temperature sending unit that grounds through the cylinder-head threads. Use sealant sparingly on the threads and make sure the engine block itself is well grounded.



[A weird  $\frac{1}{2}$  NPT, two-terminal, two-pole, normally open/normally closed (NO/NC) dual idiot-light switch (Wells PN TU42 or equivalent) was used on some GM vehicles as late as 1966. The NO “R” terminal illuminated a dash warning light at 250 degrees; the NC “G” terminal illuminated a second light on a cold engine, turning off when the temp hit 129 degrees (useful, perhaps, in Alaska). But both poles still grounded through the threads. You may be able to make this switch work as a one-light cold/hot indicator by splicing both terminals together.

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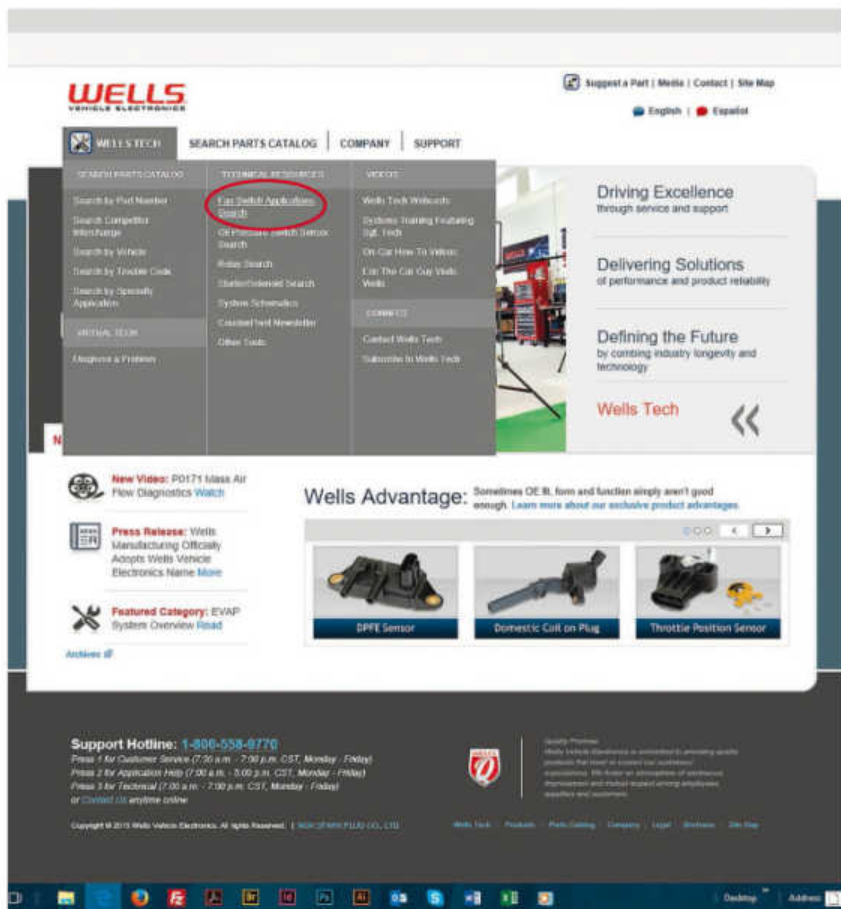
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[Wells' website [WellsVE.com](http://WellsVE.com) has a friendly user interface for finding "weird" switches. Besides searching by application or part number, there's a list of basic switch characteristics listing terminals, threads, and make/break points. To get to that list, hover your mouse over "Wells Tech." On the drop-down menu that opens, under "Technical Resources," click on "Fan Switch Applications Search." Caution: The list hasn't been updated in several years; we found several switches that may have solved Hawkin's problem are no longer available in the real world.

slightly more reasonable 230 degrees. It has  $\frac{3}{8}$ -18 NPT male threads, so it'll screw right into the later "small-hole" cylinder heads. The terminal style is the standard  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch male blade that mates with widely available push-on terminals or old-school Packard 56-series factory connectors.

That's the sanitary way we'd deal with it. But there are at least three other, more or less viable, solutions that do permit retention of the existing large-thread sender: Pick a card, any card:

- Install an external pipe/internal pipe adapter. Those with a male end that's smaller than the female end are rare. One source is Aeroquip's industrial line (Eaton Hydraulics Group): Order "adapter, external pipe/internal pipe,  $\frac{3}{8}$ -18 NPT male-to-female  $\frac{1}{2}$ -14 NPT, PN 2040-6-8S." A theoretical drawback is in a perfect world for best function and accuracy you want the sensor fully immersed into the coolant medium. This also means don't use a T-fitting to hook up both the gauge sender and bulb sender at the same location. You've got two heads on a V8 and they both have holes! Regardless of the immersion factor, there may also simply be external clearance issues with tightly wrapped exhaust headers.
- Drill and tap the new head's existing small hole oversize to  $\frac{1}{2}$ -14 NPT female. You'll need the correct  $\frac{1}{2}$ -NPT pipe tap and a  $\frac{45}{64}$ -inch drill bit. If the head's already assembled and on the car, debris from this operation could contaminate the water jackets and radiator. Plus, it may be difficult to drill the hole straight and on-center when trying to do this in-car.
- Transfer the existing "large-hole" fitting to a blank  $\frac{1}{2}$ -14 NPT hole in your typical aftermarket intake manifold's water crossover passage upstream of the thermostat. The harness will need to be extended, and this location may not be as accurate for sensing true temperature. On the other hand, it certainly keeps the sender and its wires away from hot header pipes. Chevys mounted the coolant temp sender in the intake through 1967.

## Contacts

**EATON AEROQUIP, EATON HYDRAULICS**  
**OPERATIONS USA:** Eden Prairie, MN; 952.937.9800;  
[Eaton.com/hydraulics](http://Eaton.com/hydraulics)

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**WELLS VEHICLE ELECTRONICS, NGK SPARK PLUG CO. LTD.:** Fond du Lac, WI; 800.558.9770, opt. 3 for tech;  
[WellsVE.com](http://WellsVE.com)

"some residual resistance," but not near-zero or infinite (assuming there's no break in the circuit and the switch is operating properly).

All these switches, be they gauge or warning light, are supposed to ground through the threads, creating a ground path through the heads, the block, the engine-mount bolt, and the frame. This also applies even to that early two-terminal GM sensor, which still grounds through the threads.

It might be there was a ground problem sometime in the past on this particular car, so someone installed a two-terminal switch from some niche unknown application, with the extra terminal wired to a known good external ground. If you want to maintain this type of nonproduction ground scheme, you will have to trace the custom circuit in the vehicle. If the car's existing, "incorrect"—but properly wired—sensor is operating correctly, with the key "On," and the extra terminal properly grounded, the bulb should light up; when the vehicle starts, the light should go off (unless it's the weirdo early two-terminal/dual-light GM unit, and the engine is dead cold).

Searching manufacturer websites for "fan switches" returns many more results than "coolant senders." However, we couldn't find any currently available "small-hole"  $\frac{3}{8}$ -18 NPT two-terminal automotive-style switches where the second terminal serves as a ground. That doesn't mean they don't exist somewhere (readers, can you shed any

light on this?).

There's really no reason why a "correct" one-terminal switch shouldn't work with proper ground integrity. Use only a small amount (if that) of sealant (not Teflon tape) on the threads. Use a separate ground strap off the engine to a good frame ground. Ground terminal points should be clean, rust-free, and unpainted (grease or oil them to prevent future corrosion). The "correct" 1969 Nova battery negative cable routs directly to the engine or alternator mounting bracket. There was also a supplementary ground from the battery negative terminal to the front subframe.

Now let's look at thread size and your options for getting that old idiot light to work with later heads. A warning bulb (aka "idiot light") is dumb; it's either on or off. Just about any generic, normally open (NO), temperature switch could be used to turn that bulb on. When coolant temperature reaches the switch's set point, the switch closes, the circuit to ground completes, and the bulb illuminates.

These simple switches vary only by their "make" point (the temperature at which the switch closes, or turns on). On the 1969 OE switch, the published make point was 243 degrees Fahrenheit. Frankly, by the time engine coolant reaches 243 degrees and the bulb illuminates, your radiator is probably boiling over anyway. Longacre Racing has a one-prong temp switch (PN 43252) that closes at a

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## New Elco Fuel-Sending Unit

Dixie Restoration Depot // 877.243.4943  
DixieRestorationDepot.com

Finally, a fuel-sending unit has been produced for the 1985–1987 4.3L El Camino. The direct OE-replacement sending unit is built with CNC-bent stainless steel tubing and includes a fuel strainer, lock ring, and seal.

Price: \$99.95



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## Keep the Dust Off

Power Stop // 888.863.4415  
PowerStop.com

To prevent brake-dust production in Dodge Hellcats, Power Stop Extreme Performance Brake Systems has created the Z23 and the Z26 brake pads. These brake pads are produced with the company's carbon-ceramic hybrid compound that wipes out the need to clean carbon dust off your wheels. The Z23 carbon-fiber/ceramic brake pads were designed for the high-performance daily commuters. The Z26 pads offer greater thermal stability for brisk braking at high speeds. Both models, front and rear, are offered for Dodge Hellcat Chargers and Challengers and are constructed as direct bolt-in replacements.

Price: Prices vary depending on application



## New ET Tire

Mickey Thompson // 330.928.9092  
MickeyThompsonTires.com

The ET Street Radial line from Mickey Thompson Performance Tires & Wheels now offers its next generation tire: the ET Street S/S. The S/S stands for street-to-strip, so the name speaks for itself. With a combination of the proven R2 drag-tire compound and a polyester-ply, steel-belted, tubeless radial construction, these tires guarantee outstanding dry-traction performance, durability, and dependability on the street and dragstrip. Availability includes 18- to 20-inch sizes.

Price: Starting at \$189



## Cobra Catback Exhaust System

MRT // 734.455.5807 // [ShopMRT.com](http://ShopMRT.com)

MRT recently introduced its 1999–2004 Cobra after-cat exhaust system. Constructed with the 304-series stainless steel and mandrel bent for clear exhaust flow, the efficient MRT high-flow mufflers were designed to boost your horsepower and enhance your fuel economy. The after-cat system is backed by the MRT's limited lifetime warranty.

Price: \$499.99

## Two Renovated TIG-Welding Solutions

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800.426.4553 // [MillerWelds.com](http://MillerWelds.com)

Replacing the Miller Electric Dynasty 200 model is the Dynasty 210 that features an AC/DC TIG/stick-capable power source and permits welding of up to 1/4-inch steel and aluminum in a single pass. Substituting the Maxstar 200 model is the Maxstar 210. This particular machine welds up to 1/4-inch steel in a single pass and utilizes a DC TIG/stick-capable power source. Each standalone power source weighs 50 pounds and is produced with dual carry handles and carrying strap for effortless haul. Both welding machines discharge up to 210 amps of output power.

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# Street-Legal Drags, Full Circle



I literally choked up. It was tech day at HOT ROD Drag Week™ 2015, and I was surprised to stumble upon the car that helped launch the whole Fastest Street Car racing scene, especially for me. That yellow 1969 Camaro used to belong to loudmouth promoter Rick Dyer and was part of the memorable C.A.R.S. Inc. racing team that made a huge impact on HOT ROD readers. In 1992 I took my first trip to Detroit as a HOT ROD staffer and met with Dyer—to drive his car on the street—my first experience with a Lenco transmission and with an 8-second car. Upon returning home, a staff meeting found Joe Pettit discussing the Top Gun Shootout in Atlanta, where more 8-second, street-licensed cars had shaken the Earth. The staff asked each other who really had the fastest street car in America, and there was only one way to find out: race 'em. Editor Jeff Smith called Richard Small at Flowmaster, who had also been watching the scene escalate, and set up a competition at the National Muscle Car Association race in Memphis. HOT ROD's Fastest Street Car in America Shootout was born, thrown together in a matter of a few hours and promoted for just a handful of weeks. Max Carter won, running a best of 8.38 at 160 mph.

The Shootout transformed the

NMCA; it began as a place for resto muscle and nostalgia Super Stock cars. Soon, our company owned the NMCA and executed a full event series with the likes of Tony Christian and Bob Rieger as the heroes. A number of knock-off sanctioning bodies popped up. Street-legal racing is now an entire industry. Next came the HOT ROD Pump Gas Drags, which escalated into HOT ROD Drag Week™.

All of this is very personal to me, as I was deeply involved from the start, and toured with the NMCA in its first year. At every stop, I hung with the likes of Rick Dyer, Danny Scott, Jim Treppa, Bruce Kimmen, Chuck Samuel, and Nick Scavo. We terrorized America, tearing around in 540ci-powered dualies and destroying rental go-karts in every city. We cruised ludicrous cars on the streets; Dyer and I got pulled over one night and the cop tripped over the wheelie bars. Those guys ran in the then-unheard-of 8-second range with cars that the hardcore remember to this day. I'm proud to have shot many of the photos you've seen of them, and lucky to have been part of it.

To see the Dyer car in competition at Drag Week™ brought back so many good times, and seemed to sort of close the circle on a simple but life-altering idea from so long ago: race 'em.

►HOTROD.COM/David-Freiburger



[Jeff Atkinson now owns our Dec. 1992 cover car. The Camaro was around Detroit for years, in the C.A.R.S. showroom and later on the streets with a mild crate engine. It was a tearjerker to see it back on the track.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

I'm writing this from the floor of the 2015 SEMA Show in Las Vegas. Late, as usual.

Check out our new Engine Masters video series! Good info, fun times. It's on the Motor Trend channel of YouTube.

I have a new title again: Executive Producer of Aftermarket Programming. Easier to understand than Director of Content Strategy.

We finally have T-shirts for sale for the show Roadkill that Mike Finnegan and I do on YouTube. See Roadkill.com and hit the "shop" button.

Car I Most Wanted to Build on the Day I Wrote This I'm digging the Crop Duster, my 1970 Plymouth that just got a 383 big-block stabbed into it. It needs a lot of wiring repair after HOT ROD Drag Weekend.

# Best Instagram Pic This Month



[Many of you won't like a lowrider in HOT ROD, but I think they are part of the hot rodding legacy, especially from around Los Angeles, and the paint skills seen on some of them are second to none.

## Coming Next Month: Don't Even Think About Building a New Engine Until You See This Issue

## COMING 01.08.16

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